ROGER WILLIAMS

SEP 19 1917

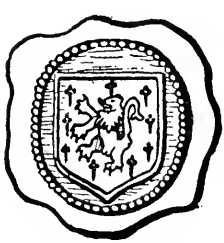
Detail of Roger Williams Statue,
Roger Williams Park, Providence

ROGER WILLIAMS

BY

MAY EMERY HALL

Author of "Dutch Days," "Jan and Betje," etc.



The Seal of Roger Williams

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BOSTON CHICAGO

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FOREWORD

For much of the data contained in this biography of Roger Williams, I am indebted to the following authorities:

Narragansett Club Publications;

Memoir of Roger Williams, by James D. Knowles;

Roger Williams: the Pioneer of Religious Liberty, by Oscar S. Straus;

Roger Williams, by Edmund J. Carpenter;

Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations;

History of the State of Rhode Island, by Samuel Greene Arnold;

Rhode Island: Its Making and Its Meaning, by Irving Berdine Richman;

Providence in Colonial Times, by Gertrude Selwyn Kimball;

Annals of the Town of Providence, by William R. Staples;

Winthrop's Journal.

My sincere thanks are due Mr. Howard

M. Chapin, Librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society, for the illustrations of the Charter House, statue of Roger Williams and the Roger Williams seal, also for permission to photograph the Roger Williams compass, and for other substantial assistance rendered in the preparation of this little volume.

I desire, too, to express my thanks for the story of the Roger Williams watch given by Mr. Henry Russell Drowne of New York City and photograph of the same.

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION

THE new Life of Roger Williams is certain to receive a cordial welcome and a wide reading. It has been eight years since Dr. Edmund J. Carpenter published his "Roger Williams, a Study of the Life, Times and Character of a Political Pioneer," and twenty-three years since the admirable work by Oscar S. Straus, entitled "Roger Williams, the Pioneer of Religious Liberty," appeared. In the meantime Irving B. Richman has given to the public his able volumes on "Rhode Island, its Making and its Meaning," which naturally and inevitably portrayed the character and service of its great founder. Rhode Island was but the incarnation of the views and principles of Roger Williams.

In view of these recent biographies, added to several which had been written previously and the large place which Roger Williams fills in all publications on New England history, it may be asked, "Is there a demand for

a new Life?" It may be answered emphatically, "Yes, if it is written in the attractive and popular style in which Mrs. Hall has done her work." She has made herself familiar with the facts of Roger Williams' life so far as known, with the spirit of the Puritan age and the causes which led to his banishment, with his advanced views of religious liberty, his courageous efforts to defend them and his heroic self-denials and sufferings to incorporate them in human government, with the reasons which justify the title now universally given to him as "the pioneer and apostle of soul liberty," with the evidences of his humane and forgiving spirit toward those who had persecuted him and his wonderful success in preserving them more than once from slaughter by hostile Indians, with his deep and abiding interest in the native tribes and his labors for their moral and spiritual elevation, with his success in acquiring their barbarous language, winning their confidence and turning many of them from their idolatry and superstitions to the knowledge of the true God and the acceptance of Christian truth, which

labors place him side by side with John Eliot, the Puritan apostle to the Indians. With all these things Mrs. Hall has made herself familiar, and also with his noble service, often rendered, as a wise statesman and recognized peacemaker among the turbulent elements in his little colony as well as between the natives and the Puritan settlers, with his recognition by the British Parliament as a scholar of exceptional ability and an eminent philanthropist, when they granted his request for a charter for his imperiled venture, and also with his intimate acquaintance with some of the distinguished leaders of the England of his day, viz., Cromwell, Milton and Sir Henry Vane, Jr., and she has told the wonderful story in a manner that will charm and instruct readers, both old and young.

The life of Roger Williams was surrounded with not a little of romance—the uncertainty of the date and place of his birth, his discovery and patronage by the eminent jurist, Sir Edward Coke, his unfortunate first-love experience, his migration to the wilderness of the new world, his

expulsion by his companions from their primitive society, who found him a disturbing element by reason of his advanced political opinions, his retention of the esteem and friendship of some of the ablest men who drove him out because of his "pestilential doctrines," as, for instance, the Winthrops, father and son, with whom he kept up an affectionate correspondence as long as he lived (more than one hundred of his letters to them have been preserved), and the remarkable success of his "lively experiment," which has given to him an honored and conspicuous name with all modern historians and has exerted an influence upon human government which is rapidly encircling the globe. Roger Williams was charged by his Puritan neighbors with having "a windmill in his head." Not only Rhode Island and Massachusetts, but the whole nation, from ocean to ocean, is now enjoying the priceless grist which that despised windmill ground out. It looks as if Roger Williams was fast coming into his own. Prof. Romeo Elton said in his "Life of Roger Williams," published sixty-three

years ago, "His property, his time and his talents were devoted to the promotion of the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind, and in conducting to a glorious issue the struggle to unloose the bonds of the captive daughter of Zion." Charles Francis Adams, in his "Massachusetts, its Historians and its History," frankly declares, "Massachusetts, in the person of her ministers and magistrates, missed a great destiny by rejecting Roger Williams."

We of to-day undoubtedly look upon the Puritans with more charity and a greater appreciation of their spirit and excellences than did those of a former generation. We recognize their great virtues as well as their glaring faults. They were men of sterling character, of deep religious convictions, of willingness to make painful sacrifices for the sake of principle, of great reverence for the Bible and the institutions of religion, of purity of life in the home and in their social relations. They believed that religion was the supreme thing and that the commandments of God were of binding obligation upon all intelligent moral beings. They

may have been too rigid in their interpretations and too severe in their application of religion to life and conduct, as, for example, in the observance of the Sabbath. But in our day of extreme and dangerous neglect men are saying, "There are some things that are worse than a Puritan Sabbath." It might be well for modern life if we, the descendants of the Puritans, had inherited more of their virtues.

Of course in the matter of the separation of church and state they were still in the bonds of ignorance. Though they had broken away from the persecuting hand of the mother land and "the mother church," as they loved to call it, they had not broken away from the belief which was the source and instigator of the persecuting spirit. As Prof. John Winthrop Platner has said recently in his "King's Chapel Lecture" on the Congregationalists, "The connection between church and state was also close, in spite of their theoretical separation, so close in fact that the government of Massachusetts Bay has often been described as a theocracy. . . . They believed that no human govern-

ment could be firmly established, unless based upon the divine. . . . The mixture of law and religion of course gave rise to difficulties, and aroused criticism. It was the persistent exercise of jurisdiction over offenses "against the first table of the law" (i.e., against the first four commandments of the decalogue) that provoked the open hostility of Roger Williams against the authorities, and caused him to protest that the things of God and the things of Cæsar should not be confounded, a protest which brought him into trouble."

The Puritans had hardly reached the dawn of the glorious day which was to be distinguished by absolute religious liberty. Roger Williams was enveloped in its full noonday splendor. Hon. James Bryce denominates him "an orthodox Puritan." True, if he means an intense, logically consistent, fully ripened, radical Puritan, a Pilgrim of the Pilgrims. In the memorable words of Judge Storey, "In the code of laws established by Williams and his companions we read for the first time, since Christianity ascended the throne of the

Cæsars, the declaration that the conscience should be free, and that men should not be punished for worshiping God in the way they were persuaded He requires." In similar language Professor Masson declares that Roger Williams organized "a community on the unheard-of principles of absolute religious liberty combined with perfect civil democracy." Such is the unanimous testimony of historians as to the character and service of the founder of Rhode Island. Mr. Oscar Straus expresses the hope "that the time is not far distant when the civilized people in the remotest corners of the earth will recognize the truth and power of the principles which throw around the name of Roger Williams a halo of imperishable glory and fame." May this new and popular biography, charming in style, appreciative in spirit and in harmony with the generally accepted facts of history, hasten the realization of this sublime hope.

HENRY M. KING,
Pastor Emeritus of the First Baptist Church (The Roger Williams Church).

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

ROGER WILLIAMS

"ROGER WILLIAMS STEERED HIS LITTLE SHIP OF STATE TO A SAFE HARBOR BY THE COMPASS OF AN ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE."—*STRAUS.*

ROGER WILLIAMS

CHAPTER I

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

TUCKED away in the northeastern corner of the United States is the tiny state of Rhode Island. "Little Rhody" she is often affectionately called, although her full name is "State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." Such an overwhelming title for such a small body! Yet not only in length of name, but in the number of her capital cities, has Rhode Island led her sister states. Up to the year 1900 she boasted two capitals, while every other state in the Union was contented with one. From the beginning, Rhode Island has made up in interesting history what she has lacked in size.

Much of this history is hinted at in the names found within her borders. Take the name Providence, for example. It sounds as if it had a story back of it—as, indeed, it

has. Other quaint and suggestive names are found in the streets of the capital—Benefit, Benevolent and Friendship—and in the islands in Narragansett Bay—Prudence, Patience, Hope.

Rhode Island's story is largely that of Roger Williams, yet he was too great a man to belong to one bit of the country alone. He is one of the finest characters in United States history, though people were long in finding it out. Even to-day we do not always remember the noble services he rendered our country. Men who do spectacular things have many biographers, while quiet lives often remain unrecorded. We are apt to forget that it may take as much bravery to stand abuse and loss of friends as to face the cannon's mouth, that even more courage is required to fight for disagreeable truths than to win battles. So while Roger Williams never did anything to startle the world, he will remain one of the great moral soldiers of all time. Lacking appreciation in the day in which he lived, he deserves the honor of our own age. It is time he came into his own.

The lives of most famous men begin with a fixed date. Stories of family and boyhood follow, with perhaps a clear description of the great man himself. In this respect, Roger Williams' life is different from the others. We have not the faintest idea what he looked like—whether he was tall or short, stout or thin, dark or light, had blue eyes or brown. No true portrait of him has ever been discovered. The artists who have attempted to give us his likeness in bronze or marble or on canvas have had to idealize him.

Out of a shadowy past, largely from our own imagination, we must make up for ourselves a picture of his early days. Roger Williams has left a very scant account of his boyhood and he was too unpopular in the seventeenth century for others to take the trouble to record it. When later writers did so, they made many mistakes. This is not strange, as there were probably several persons by the name of Roger Williams living at the same time as our hero.

To begin with, the very date of Roger Williams' birth is unknown. It is given

by different historians anywhere between 1599 and 1607. In his own writings, Roger Williams referred once or twice to his age, but in such an indefinite way that we are led to think that he was not exactly sure of his birthday. Thus in a letter written to John Winthrop in 1632, he said he was "nearer upwards of thirty than twenty-five." Again, in 1679, he said he was "near to fourscore years of age." Even with the most careful arithmetic, we shall have to be content with the rather vague information that he was born near the beginning of the seventeenth century.

As to his birthplace, on this point also there has been much dispute. For many years it was thought to be Wales, but now it has been quite clearly proved that Roger Williams was born in London. The ancient court records that point to this fact show that James Williams was the father of Roger and a merchant tailor living in the parish of "St. Sepulchres, without Newgate, London." He was apparently in comfortable circumstances, for his will provided not only for his wife and children, but

directed that gifts of money and bread be distributed among the city poor.

Alice Williams, the mother of Roger, who survived her husband, owned or leased property in Cow Lane. In her will she mentioned four children—Sidrach, the oldest, Roger, "now beyond the seas," Katherine, wife of John Davies, and Robert. To Roger she bequeathed ten pounds, or about fifty dollars, to be paid yearly for a term of twenty years.

The oldest boy of the family, Sidrach, after he grew up, became a merchant of Turkey and other southern countries of Europe. Roger Williams referred to him as follows:

"Myself have seen the Old Testament of the Jews, most curious writing, whose price (in way of trade) was threescore pound, which my brother, a Turkey merchant, had and showed me."

Roger's younger brother Robert became, like himself, a Rhode Island colonist. He was one of the first settlers of Providence and later became a schoolmaster at Newport.

Like many another boy, Roger Williams owed his start in life to a great man. Sir Edward Coke was a brilliant English lawyer when Roger was young. His friendship for the lad is best described by Sir Edward's daughter:

"This Roger Williams, when he was a youth, would, in a short-hand, take sermons and speeches in the Star Chamber, and present them to my dear father. He, seeing so hopeful a youth, took such liking to him that he sent him in to Sutton's Hospital, and he was the second placed there."

The Star Chamber was a London Court, so called because the room in which it met had a ceiling decorated with gilt stars. The school mentioned in the letter is better known as the Charter House School. On its roll of students are such famous names as Addison, Steele, John Wesley and Grote. That Roger Williams remembered his early friend with gratitude is shown by these words written in middle life:

"And I may truly say, that beside my natural inclination to study and activity, his example, instruction and encouragement

have spurred me on to a more than ordinary, industrious and patient course in my whole course hitherto."

There is, indeed, every reason to think that Roger Williams proved to be the kind of pupil Sir Edward hoped he would be, for while at the Charter House he successfully prepared himself for college. Yet of his real life as a schoolboy—his chums, his sports, his pranks, his holidays—we know almost nothing. One tiny bit of information has come down to us, however, which would seem to show that Roger Williams was not very different from other boys. Thackeray, the great novelist, who was himself a scholar at the Charter House School years later, once said, in a lecture in Providence, that he had found in a beam of the old school the letters "R W" which Roger Williams cut there as a boy. Whenever Thackeray had to educate his boy characters, he usually sent them to this venerable old institution. This is the way he pictures it in "The Newcomes":

"Under the great archway of the hospital he could look at the old Gothic building;

and a black-gowned pensioner or two crawling over the quiet square, or passing from one dark arch to another. The boarding-houses of the school were situated in the square, hard by the more ancient buildings of the hospital. A great noise of shouting, crying, clapping forms and cupboards, treble voices, bass voices, poured out of the schoolboys' windows: their life, bustle and gaiety contrasted strangely with the quiet of those old men, creeping along in their black gowns under the ancient arches yonder, whose struggle of life was over, whose hope and noise and bustle had sunk into that gray calm."

In all probability, Roger Williams continued his education at Pembroke College. Being the college of the great man who had interested himself in the boy, it was the one that would most likely be chosen. After graduating with a degree, Roger Williams studied law for a time. Then, deciding to become a minister, he took orders in the Church of England and obtained a position as chaplain in the household of Sir William Masham of Otes, in the county of Essex.

Entrance to Charter House, London. This photograph was loaned by Mr. Howard M. Chapin, Librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence.

A delightful and, at the same time, amusing love story has come to light which reveals one of the last glimpses of Roger Williams in the Old World. It seems that the wife of his patron, Lady Masham, had a cousin, Jane Whalley, with whom the young chaplain fell in love. He proceeded to write two letters to Miss Whalley's aunt and guardian, Lady Barrington, asking for the hand of her niece. In the first, he mentions the fact that the affair has caused considerable talk and he hints that Miss Jane returns his affection. Then he sums up his worldly possessions—an expected trifling legacy from his mother, a little money ("sevenscore pieces") and a small library ("a little yet costly study of books"). Pitiful means, indeed, for winning a young lady of rank! Yet Roger Williams frankly pointed out to the aunt that the advantages were not all on one side, for in spite of Miss Whalley's high birth, she had a most passionate temper.

Everything considered, it is not strange that the struggling minister was flatly rejected. The second letter addressed to

Lady Barrington is such as only a disappointed, angry lover could write. He says in plain language that the Lord is very angry with her ladyship and that if she does not repent, all sorts of dreadful things are likely to happen to her. The lengthy sermon-letter is filled with Scriptural quotations. Still, although he asserts, "We hope to live together in the heavens though the Lord have denied that union on earth," time proved a rapid healer. In less than two years he had transferred his affection to a Miss Mary Warnard, or Barnard, and made her his wife.

The sequel of the unfortunate love affair is rather interesting. Of course Miss Jane married another man, but, as it happened, he was a clergyman like her former sweetheart. In turn she came to know the pioneer life of New England as did Roger Williams, being located for some years in Massachusetts and Connecticut. She later returned to old England, where her husband became chaplain to her cousin, Oliver Cromwell, who was also a friend of Roger Williams. In fact, Cromwell's real family

name was Williams and some historians have even asserted that he was related to Roger Williams.

The correspondence with Lady Barrington is of importance aside from the disappointing love passages it records. For here is given an early inkling of that unrest and dissatisfaction in religious matters that was to play so large a part in the future life of the youthful chaplain. Already beginning to protest against the established forms of worship, he writes, "A tender conscience hath kept me back from honor and preferment." Then follows the merest hint of having received a call from New England.

By this time Roger Williams had formed the habit of thinking for himself and of holding firmly to what he believed to be right, whether others agreed with him or not. During his stay in Essex, he used to talk over religious subjects with his fellow-clergymen and to explain why he differed from them on certain points. Among these companions were Thomas Hooker and John Cotton, whose lives ran parallel to his on

both sides of the water. The three friends rode through the countryside earnestly discussing the burning questions uppermost in their minds. Little did they dream where these same discussions would lead! Had Master Hooker and Master Cotton been told that the argumentative man who rode by their side was to become one of the makers of American history and a leader in world thought, they would most likely have said, "Oh, no. Roger Williams is our friend, but he is really a very short-sighted and very obstinate fellow." Indeed, he had gained the reputation among his Sussex neighbors of being "divinely mad."

These, then, are the few meager facts of the beginnings of Roger Williams' existence before he set his face toward the New World. His life in England will always remain more or less of a mystery. Not so, fortunately, his life in America. His hardships, trials, adventures and sufferings have become familiar history. And it is this part of the story that is most important, for Roger Williams is, first and last, a great American.

CHAPTER II

WESTWARD, HO!

In order to understand why Roger Williams should have wanted to make his home on this side of the water, we should know a little something of the England in which he lived. It was not then the free, liberal country it is to-day. In many matters, especially those relating to religion, a man could not do as he chose, but as he was told. To-day, one can attend any church he pleases; *then* he was forced by law to attend the established church. The king was the head of both church and state.

Now it was not surprising that all persons of that day did not care to support the same church. They were not able to think alike, any more than we who live to-day. Curious, indeed, it would be if we held exactly the same views as our neighbors and worshiped in the same church. Some of the men of Roger Williams' day objected

to the teachings of the national church, others wished to do away with its forms and ceremonies. And because they could not conscientiously worship the way the sovereign commanded, serious trouble arose. Those who were independent enough to defy the king were liable to be fined, banished or imprisoned. And the prisons of those days were anything but pleasant places in which to spend one's time!

The persons who objected to the established form of worship were of two classes. On the one hand were church members who believed in working for certain religious reforms without separating from the church. Their enemies nicknamed them *Puritans*. The Puritans argued something like this:

"We do not think our ministers should wear vestments. Neither do we believe it right to make the sign of the cross in baptism. Kneeling at sacrament is sinful in our eyes, also the use of the organ in church. These ceremonies are too much like those of the Roman church from which we have turned. But the established church is our church. She is our own dear mother and

we will not forsake her. At the same time, while still remaining her children, we will try to lead her to a better, purer life."

The Separatists went further than this. In turn, they argued:

"The church is corrupt and we will have nothing to do with her. We will form congregations of our own and worship according to our own consciences."

It is easy to see that being a Separatist was a far more dangerous thing than being a Puritan. By remaining in the church, the Puritan was shielded to an extent. The Separatist, on the other hand, had no protection.

When James, the first Stuart king, came to the throne, he kept in mind the motto, "No bishops, no king." For political purposes, he determined on a course of persecution. He said of all those who would not support the national church, "I will *make* them conform, or I will harry them out of the land."

That is just what he did. A little band of Separatists, who were later to become world-famous, were glad to flee to Holland

to escape persecution. It was no small thing, three hundred or more years ago, for any European country to shelter a people whose religion differed from that of the state church and we therefore like to think of the liberality of the Dutch. They and the English immigrants lived together like brothers for a period of years. A thriving settlement was founded at Leyden, and here, for about twelve years, the fugitives knew the meaning of peace and happiness. Many of them learned to speak and write the Dutch language, which one writer has called "the sister language nearest to the English." There were certainly marriages between the two peoples and the English children were doubtless sent to the free Dutch schools for their education.

As Roger Williams was familiar with Dutch, it may be that he studied the language with the idea of making Holland his home. However that may be, such a plan was never carried out. At least once he had occasion to address King James, though what the occasion was, we are unable to guess. He merely referred to the monarch

briefly as "King James, whom I have spoke with."

Why did the English in Holland begin to long for still another home? Living so contentedly, why were they not satisfied to remain so? There seem to have been two reasons for their feeling as they did. To begin with, there was grave danger of their becoming a part of the Dutch nation. They were afraid of losing their speech, customs, religion—everything that made them English Separatists.

Then, too, when they had attempted to spread their doctrines by means of printing, King James had interfered and taken possession of the types. When such tyranny as this could exist even in kindly Holland, they thought it was high time to seek a home elsewhere.

> "No home for these!—too well they knew
> The mitered king behind the throne;
> The sails were set, the pennons flew,
> And westward, ho! for worlds unknown."

The rest of the story of the "Pilgrim Fathers" we all know—how they crossed

the water, battled against famine, disease and poverty, and succeeded slowly but surely in building up a settlement at Plymouth.

Years passed before they had any neighbors. At last, in 1628, the little settlement of Salem was formed by the Massachusetts Bay Company. This was followed two years later by a big migration of Puritans to New England under John Winthrop which led to the founding of Boston and several smaller towns. The colony which embraced these different settlements was called Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Meanwhile, things had been going from bad to worse in England. King Charles was now on the throne and his subjects were discouraged to find that he was even more of a tyrannical master than James, his father. How could anybody expect justice or fairness from a ruler who believed that because he was a king, he could do no wrong? It grew more and more uncomfortable for the Puritans every day, even in the established church. One of Charles' chief advisers, Archbishop Laud, was busy

ridding the country of all "heretics" and other offenders against the royal will and law. If Roger Williams had now taken notes in the Star Chamber as he did when a boy, he would have recorded many undeserved punishments, such as heavy fines, whippings and worse. But he was now a man and looking with longing eyes across the ocean, as so many of his countrymen had before him.

As to Roger Williams' true place among the different sects of his time, he was without doubt a Separatist. More than one passage in his letters points to this as the truth. There was no half-way to a man of his decided character. Believing as he did, there was only one thing for him to do—seek a refuge in the New World.

"And truly it was as bitter as death to me," he wrote in after years, "when Bishop Laud pursued me out of this land, and my conscience was persuaded against the national church, and ceremonies, and bishops."

By the last of the year 1630, our pioneer was ready to sail for America and on De-

cember 1st, he took passage in the ship *Lyon,* commanded by Captain Pierce, at Bristol. With him was his young wife Mary. Very little is known about her early history—far less than what has been discovered about the fair Jane whom Roger Williams failed to win. That she made a good wife and mother and shared her husband's troublous career with loving devotion is quite certain.

For over two months, in the dead of winter, the vessel battled with gales and storms and ice. One passenger, a young man, lost his life and at times probably everybody aboard felt sure they would never see land again. It must have been with deep relief and thanksgiving that the weary passengers finally landed safely at Nantasket, near Boston, February 5, 1631.

In this stormy fashion, Roger Williams' new life began.

CHAPTER III

NEW NEIGHBORS

We have seen that by the time Roger Williams had made up his mind to emigrate to America, the most important colonies in New England were Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Plymouth was Separatist and the Bay Colony Puritan, but every day growing farther and farther from the English Church. We would expect Roger Williams to decide upon the Plymouth settlement as a home, as its people held similar views to his own and it was the more liberal colony of the two. Why, instead, he chose to live in Massachusetts Bay Colony cannot be easily explained. Possibly in far-away England he did not rightly understand just how matters stood in New England.

However, there was great rejoicing when the young minister and his wife first appeared in Boston. The talented stranger

was hailed as a "godly minister" and a welcome addition to the little colony. Far different language was used a few years later when he was turned out of that same colony, a homeless fugitive, disgraced and forbidden ever to return! The friendship between Roger Williams and the Bay authorities lasted only until each had an opportunity to get better acquainted with the other.

At first, the future loomed bright and promising to Roger Williams. Hundreds of miles behind him were tyrannical king, heartless bishop, and all that had made life on English soil a burden. Ahead were long years of peace, freedom and usefulness among new neighbors who were his own people.

How different was to be the future from what he imagined! He had yet to learn that here, in the wilds of New England, was a tyranny, in some respects as narrow as that of King Charles. Here, too, was unjust persecution very much like that from which he had fled. The Massachusetts Puritans who had left the mother country because

they could not worship according to their consciences now refused to let others worship according to *their* consciences. They who had been made to suffer for thinking as they pleased now caused their neighbors to suffer for the same reason. They held that while they had objected to the corruptions of the established church, now that a purer form of worship had taken its place, it must and should be supported. They had bitterly criticized the English Church, but nobody must criticize theirs!

The accepted law was the Ten Commandments. These were divided into "two tables." The first four, or those which summed up man's duty to God, were the "first table," while the remaining six, which covered the duties of man to man, were the "second table." A person guilty of breaking any one of the Commandments was liable to be punished by the magistrates. The government of the colony was based upon the old Mosaic Law. Severe and heartless were the penalties meted out to offenders—often more severe and more heartless than those of England. Naturally

the world had progressed during the hundreds of years that had elapsed since the rigid code of the Hebrew law-giver was in force.

Into this narrow body of believers came Roger Williams, who was to become the "apostle of soul liberty." From the very start, he was looked upon as a trouble-maker. A Boston clergyman, Cotton Mather, writing about this period some years later, said that Roger Williams had a windmill in his head.

"In the year 1654, a certain windmill in the Low Countries, whirling round with extraordinary violence, by reason of a violent storm then blowing, the stone at length by its rapid motion became so intensely hot as to fire the mill, from whence the flames, being dispersed by the high winds, did set a whole town on fire. But I can tell my reader that, about twenty years before this, there was a whole country in America like to be set on fire by the rapid motion of a windmill, in the head of one particular man."

Immediately upon his arrival, the earnest

young minister was given a chance to preach in a Boston church, but he refused for two reasons. First, the church members were an "unseparated people" and would not confess they were sorry for having had communion with English churches. Now it would seem that, on this first point, Roger Williams was quite as narrow as his neighbors. Yet he was at least consistent. Here were his fellow-fugitives who had suffered abuse and persecution for protesting against the "corruptions" of the established church. For the sake of their convictions they had given up home and friends in the Old World to face the trials and hardships of the New. Yet they still persisted in clinging fondly to the old church.

What Roger Williams practically said to them was:

"You have left the old life behind and have started in on the new. You have been given a chance to found a church after your own heart. Why, then, are you not a separated people? I cannot preach to you, for *I* have broken away forever from the church that has persecuted me."

Roger Williams' second objection to preaching in the Boston pulpit was that the magistrates were allowed to punish sins of the "first table." This foreshadowed the principle of soul liberty, which denied the right of civil power to interfere in spiritual matters.

The whole trouble arose from the Puritans confusing church and state. They could not comprehend that the two should be separate, independent bodies. In the spring of 1631, they passed a law providing that only church members should have the privilege of citizenship. They believed that the magistrates had just as much right to punish for spiritual offences as for civil offences, or those which disturbed the well-being of the community. When Roger Williams had carried his views on the subject to a logical conclusion years later, he made them clear in the form of a parable.

He said that the State was like an immense ship carrying all kinds of passengers. Among them are Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Turks. Their different religions are, of course, very unlike and the captain

should be sensible enough to understand this and let each one worship as he pleases, according to his own peculiar custom. This is only fair, as long as the passengers remain peaceful and orderly. If, however, any one of them refuses to pay for his passage or disturbs the peace, then and then only has the captain a right to step in and punish the offender. But he does not interfere because the culprit is a Jew or a Catholic or a Protestant, but because he has not respected the rights of others. In the same way, the State has a right to see that its citizens are well-behaved, but should leave their religion alone.

From the very beginning, then, there was trouble for Roger Williams. Not many months passed before he received an appointment as assistant to the Reverend Samuel Skelton of Salem. The General Court of Massachusetts did not like the choice of the Salem people and wrote a letter to that effect. Nevertheless, the sentiment in favor of the outspoken minister was such that he was allowed to take his charge without difficulty.

At this settlement, matters progressed more smoothly. Roger Williams' congregation was well pleased with him and showed their affection for him after he ceased being their minister, as we shall see. He was not permitted, however, to remain here more than a few months, for the authorities could not leave any man alone who was believed to be such a mischief-maker. By the close of summer, he was obliged to move to Plymouth.

For two years he led a fairly peaceful life in his new home, but it was not an easy existence. "At Plymouth," he wrote, "I spake on the Lord's days and week days and wrought hard at the hoe for my bread."

During his ministry, Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts, in company with others, went to Plymouth for a little visit, going afoot the latter part of the journey. They were met outside the town, escorted to the governor's house, and royally entertained at different homes in the days that followed. On Sunday, they attended church, of course. Roger Williams was the preacher, although the Plymouth governor, elders and guests

also took part in the service. The peaceful Sabbath afternoon stands out in strange contrast to the stormy scenes that came after.

During this period, a little daughter was born, to whom was given the name of her mother, Mary.

While Roger Williams was not persecuted at Plymouth, he was very ready to return to Salem and the good friends he had left there when the opportunity came. Receiving a second call from the Salem church, probably in the summer of 1633, he gave up his ministry in Plymouth and made preparations to go back to his old parish. Some of his congregation were loath to have him go—in fact, so closely had he endeared them to him that several followed him to Salem.

Before taking up Roger Williams' history in that town, let us pause for a moment to see who some of the men were who had already come in contact with the vigorous preacher or who were to shape his future course. Such a grim portrait gallery of unflinching old Puritans they represent!

As we look at some of the stern, forbidding faces, we cannot help being grateful that we are living in the twentieth century instead of the age of Roger Williams.

Occupying a central place on the dark canvas is a Puritan of the Puritans—intellectual, proud, superior. There is no mistaking him—John Cotton, of whom we have had a glimpse before. His mouth seems about to open, so eager is he for a learned argument. He is the exact opposite of Roger Williams and the two men are to be pitted against each other all their lives. The title of "unmitered pope of New England" will be given him by future generations. Like his opponent, he follows what he believes to be the path of right, but whereas with Roger Williams it leads to liberty, with John Cotton it leads to persecution. We pass to the next portrait with a sigh of relief.

Thomas Hooker, also the friend of early days, comes next. Milder, less learned, perhaps, than John Cotton, he still has a reputation for able argument. He is to

labor long and earnestly to make the mischief-maker see the error of his ways.

Governor Bradford of *Mayflower* fame, dignified and scholarly, comes next in order. There is nothing of the tyrant in his make-up. While believing Roger Williams "unsettled in judgment," he is just enough to say that he is "a man godly and zealous, having many precious parts." Though he does not entirely approve of him, he is "thankful to him, even for his sharpest admonitions and reproofs so far as they agree with truth."

We linger long upon the next portrait—a kindly face, that of a good friend. It is another governor of Plymouth, Edward Winslow. Fortunate, indeed, is Roger Williams to have this "great and pious soul" interested in him. Dark days are ahead and his friendship—not to mention a welcome piece of gold for needed family provisions—will not come amiss.

We hardly believe that Elder Brewster, the next in line, could bring himself to do so gracious a deed. His conscience is too sensitive. Thankful enough is he that the

call to the Salem church will prevent the further spreading of "dangerous" doctrine in Plymouth. It is the part of prudence to bid Roger Williams Godspeed.

Who is that eager, restless person who occupies the next place—whose flashing eyes and open face tell as plainly as words that he is the creature of impulse? He is always doing hasty things, being sorry for them, and then doing the next hasty thing that presents itself! Big-hearted, reckless, courageous, narrow John Endicott! It is no wonder he is often in disgrace. Let us not forget that more than once he champions the cause of Roger Williams.

The finest Puritan of them all comes last, Governor John Winthrop of the Bay Colony. A splendid, noble face is his. He is every inch a gentleman. He has brought the best of old England into the crude life of New England and is helping to build up so sturdy a race that the generations which follow will be proud of their descent from him and Puritans like him. He does not agree with Roger Williams, but a life-long friendship springs up between the two.

"Mr. John Winthrop," said the younger man, "tenderly loved me to his last breath." Many of the quaint, old-fashioned letters addressed to the Bay governor have come down to us. "I sometimes fear," says the writer, "that my lines are as thick and over-busy as the mosquitoes." He discusses religious questions, talks over Indian troubles and asks Winthrop's advice, because, says he, "of the frequent experience of your loving ear, ready and open toward me."

These, then, were a few of Roger Williams' neighbors. There were still other neighbors, who were friends as well. These were the New England Indians. From the very beginning of his new life in America, Roger Williams had taken a deep interest in them. For one thing, he held that as they were the first-comers, the land belonged to them and could not be rightly owned by others, except by purchase. It is true that most of the colonists did pay for the territory they occupied whatever the natives thought it was worth, yet as soon as Roger Williams gave his opinion on the subject, he was accused of disloyalty. It was one

thing to bargain with the savages, quite another to announce boldly that James, who granted the first New England charter, was not "sovereign lord" of the whole continent, and that those who claimed land merely by royal grant had no title to it whatever.

In spite of opposition, Roger Williams had the courage of his convictions. He wrote a treatise on the subject which he sent to the governor and council of Plymouth.

No portion of Roger Williams' life is more interesting than that which deals with the red men. The Wampanoags or Pokanokets, whose chief was Massasoit, occupied the Plymouth territory, while to the west were the powerful Narragansetts, whose sachems were Canonicus and Miantonomo. To gain the friendship of the Indians, Roger Williams endured all kinds of hard and unpleasant experiences, for his "soul's desire was to do the natives good." He visited them, he encouraged their visiting him, he patiently studied their language. To quote his own words: "God was pleased to give me a painful, patient spirit to lodge with them in their filthy, smoky holes (even

while I lived at Plymouth and Salem) to gain their tongue."

It was a fortunate thing for the colonists that Roger Williams took this trouble. Otherwise he would not have been able to act as interpreter and peacemaker in after years, when Indian uprisings threatened the settlements. It is not an exaggeration to say that no one man prevented more bloodshed in early New England than Roger Williams.

The Indians, often suspicious and untrustworthy where other men were concerned, always showed a child-like confidence in their best friend. This was not because he "took sides" with them. Often he told them they were in the wrong and urged them to do the right thing by their white neighbors. It was the absolute justice and sincerity of Roger Williams that won their admiration. He could tell no lie. Of that they felt sure, so they accepted what he told them without argument or denial.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR OF WORDS

VERY little is known about Roger Williams' home in Salem, beyond the fact that it was the former residence of Francis Higginson, a teacher of the Salem church. At his death, the house passed to Mrs. Higginson, but after occupying it but for a short time, she allowed her husband's successor to take possession of it. Roger Williams probably bought it outright, for later he spoke of mortgaging it to raise needed funds. If it was like the usual Colonial dwelling of that day, it was plain and rather bare, but comfortable and roomy to a degree, after the early New England standard. A gabled roof, generous open fireplaces, and windows made up of many tiny panes of glass were its most conspicuous features.

As to the church in which Roger Williams preached, even less information has been gleaned than that relating to his home.

For many years a tradition has persisted that it was a diminutive, raftered structure with steep-pitched roof and clay floor—the whole thing more nearly resembling a backwoods cabin than a place of worship. There is little reason to think that the Salem congregations—with whom church-going was a sacred duty—could have been housed in such a rude chapel, which was no larger than a good-sized room. Yet while the First Church was an improvement on this, it must have presented a striking contrast to the beautiful Old World cathedral churches, with which some of the parishioners were familiar.

Back in Salem, Roger Williams soon found himself in the midst of a war of words far more serious than any that had gone before. He was first called to account by the governor and his assistants for the pamphlet he had written in Plymouth declaring that the right of the Indians to the territory they occupied was greater than that of the King. Upon being censured for his opinions, Roger Williams was, for once, very humble. He said he had no intention

of causing trouble and even went so far as to offer to burn a portion, or even the whole, of the book if the authorities so desired. The charge was dropped for the time being. His accusers "found the matters not to be so evil as at first they seemed." Yet scarcely a year had passed before he was summoned to appear before the court for persisting "in teaching publicly against the King's patent, and our great sin in claiming right thereby to this country."

They were not always big questions that occupied the attention of New England congregations at this time. Roger Williams was guilty, with the others, of entering into lengthy discussions about what would seem to us to-day very unimportant trifles. He was no perfect hero, but had his faults and weaknesses, like the best of men. Some writers are of the opinion that he often argued merely for the sake of differing from others. We should be charitable to both him and his rigid neighbors, remembering the narrow age in which they lived.

Think of the absurdity of a whole community getting wildly excited over the ques-

tion of women wearing veils in churches and other public places! Roger Williams attempted to show that no modest woman would appear with face uncovered. John Cotton, in an earnest sermon, taught just the opposite. John Endicott of course had a voice in the dispute—there were those who said he was the one who started it—and quoted much Scripture to show *he* was in the right. Finally, the governor himself had to step in and quiet them all. What a puzzling existence it must have been for the poor women of Salem! When their brilliant, learned ministers flatly contradicted one another, yet all took the Bible for authority, what course was open for a mere woman of ordinary intelligence?

The veil controversy was, without question, unimportant and even silly. Another matter now came up, which was somewhat more serious. John Endicott got into trouble because he cut the red cross of St. George out of the military colors. To him it was an anti-Christian sign that ought not to be retained by people who had broken away from symbols and ceremonies. The

General Court punished him by depriving him of public office for a year. What had Roger Williams to do with it all? Absolutely nothing, as far as can be found out. Yet the blame has long rested on his shoulders, because, it was claimed, if he had not preached the doctrines he did, John Endicott would never have thought of such a thing!

Roger Williams was not regularly ordained until after the death of Mr. Skelton. Then, in defiance of the magistrates, who were greatly displeased, the Salem church welcomed him as pastor. The people to whom he ministered had something of his own courageous spirit in holding out for the appointment.

The Indian question was not the only one for which the General Court rebuked Roger Williams. On one charge or another, he was repeatedly in disgrace. One of his offences was the stand he took in regard to oaths. He held "that a magistrate ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man." To us, this taking of an oath seems a simple enough duty and one to which there

could be no objection. With Roger Williams, however, it meant an act of worship and, as such, should not be forced upon anybody, least of all upon one to whom it had no real meaning. Believing as he did that the Lord's name should never be taken in vain, was it not wrong to require a man who did not fear God to take such phrases on his lips as, "I therefore do swear by the great and dreadful name of the ever living God," and "So help me, God in the Lord Jesus Christ"? To him this was nothing less than profanity.

The solemn words quoted above are to be found in what was known as the Freeman's Oath, which was a pledge of loyalty and support to the government. The person taking the oath agreed to submit to the "wholesome laws" established by that government. Now Roger Williams had found some of these laws anything but wholesome. Then, too, the Freeman's Oath seemed to transfer allegiance from the King to the government of Massachusetts and was, therefore, contrary to the charter. Thus there were reasons why Roger Williams ob-

jected to oath-taking in general and may have objected to this oath in particular.

Heading the list of "divers dangerous opinions" brought against the once "godly minister" by the General Court in July, 1635, was this:

"That the magistrates ought not to punish the breach of the first table, otherwise than in such cases as did disturb the civil peace."

The words have a familiar sound. Denial of the civil power to exert authority over a man's conscience—the true Roger Williams principle! It was this, as we have seen, which caused a breach with the authorities almost as soon as the troublesome preacher landed in New England. At this court, he was plainly told that at the next court he must either "give satisfaction or else expect the sentence."

So things went from bad to worse. Roger Williams became ill. He had traveled back and forth, from Salem to Boston, from Boston to Salem, with weary limbs but dauntless courage, to argue questions that he honestly believed were matters of conscience

and not of state. At first his church loyally supported him. In return, the magistrates treated the church like a naughty child who has done wrong and must be deprived of something it longs for until it makes up its mind to be good again. In this case, the withheld treasure was some land in Marblehead Neck to which the church laid claim. Both minister and congregation wrote sharp letters to the Bay churches, protesting against the persecution of their magistrate members. Alas, the churches were not big enough morally to range themselves against the authorities and their injustice!

Feeble, discouraged, with a sense of injury rankling within, Roger Williams withdrew from them and refused to have anything more to do with his own church unless it did the same. It was an extreme measure, but there was great provocation. Unfortunately, the Salem church lost its brief bravery and decided to "be good." Its minister was left to fight his battle single-handed.

A crisis rapidly approached. Of course Roger Williams refused to change his views.

He could not conscientiously do so, and he was not the coward to proclaim one thing while believing another. In the autumn, therefore, the following sentence of banishment was passed, after Thomas Hooker had vainly tried to open the eyes of the culprit:

"Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church of Salem, hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions, against the authority of magistrates, as also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license from the court."

Only one voice was raised against this decree—an unknown champion whose name has never been found out. Yet the town of

This photograph was taken on Roger Williams Avenue, Philipsdale, East Providence. A glimpse of the Seekonk River is seen in the background. The house itself has no historical interest.

The tree is marked with a tablet bearing these words: "This oak tree marks the first dwelling place of Roger Williams after his banishment from Salem, Mass., in 1636, which he abandoned in the spring of that year by request of Governor Winslow of Plymouth. The spring is 160 feet north. This tree was planted April 27, 1904, by the Roger Williams Association."

Salem, more merciful than its magistrates, was in an uproar at the news.

It would be too tedious and wearisome to wade through all the disputes of those troublous days. After a lapse of nearly three hundred years, it is not easy to decide accurately who was in the right and who in the wrong. There is still a great difference of opinion on the subject. There was, without doubt, something of right and wrong on both sides. Some of the points Roger Williams fought for with vigor were not worth the effort, others were big principles that the world has long since adopted.

It will throw some light on the matter to know just what the disgraced man himself considered the true grounds of his banishment. He tells us one of the magistrates rightly summed up the offences under four heads:

"First, that we have not our land by patent from the King, but that the natives are the true owners of it, and that we ought to repent of such a receiving it by patent.

"Secondly, that it is not lawful to call a

wicked person to swear, to pray, as being actions of God's worship.

"Thirdly, that it is not lawful to hear any of the ministers of the parish assemblies in England.

"Fourthly, that the civil magistrates' power extends only to the bodies and goods, and outward state of men."

How harmless these opinions seem today! Tinged perhaps with a bit of narrowness, they are at the same time hardly "crimes" for which a person should be cut off from his fellow men.

In regard to the Indian question, the colonists might have feared trouble with the mother country as a result of Roger Williams' utterances. Puritanism was not popular with the King and he would not be inclined to look more kindly upon the Massachusetts pioneers when one of their number proclaimed boldly that his father had told "a solemn public lie, because, in his patent, he blessed God that he was the first Christian prince that had discovered the land."

As to the principle that the civil power should have no authority over the con-

sciences of men, there can be no difference of opinion. In this respect, at least, Roger Williams was far ahead of the men with whom he associated. On the other hand, they were sincere in their horror of any theory that tended to divide church and state. Little did they guess that the time would come when the two would be entirely separate and that the honor of blazoning the way would be given to the banished Roger Williams. Little did they dream that there would be a United States Constitution with the clauses: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States," and "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

On account of Roger Williams' poor health, the time limit of six weeks was extended to spring. He was a menace, and yet there was something so lovable about him that even his enemies could not hate him very hard.

What a dreary outlook for the disgraced, disappointed man at the beginning of the

new year! He had now been in New England a little less than five years. Instead of having gained a position as a wonderful preacher with a brilliant future, he had lost his church and even a place in the colony. That same church, after upholding his cause for a brief period, had deserted him. The support of his dear ones was harder than ever, for a new baby had come into the Williams household. With health broken down under the strain of his trials, the husband and father was yet forced to begin planning for a new home in some unknown country to the west.

The day of banishment was hastened when it was discovered that Roger Williams was holding meetings in his own house. "He did use to entertain company," so the ancient records run, "and to preach to them, even of such points as he had been censured for." The rumor also went around that he had decided to found a settlement on the shores of Narragansett Bay and to take along with him about twenty persons whom he had won to his way of thinking. Immediately the authorities were alarmed. It

would never do to have such unsettled men for neighbors! They might continue to spread their dangerous doctrines among the other churches. Why not dispose of their mischievous leader once and for all by shipping him back to England? It was the easiest way out of the difficulty, for a vessel was even then lying at anchor, ready to sail.

For a last time poor Roger Williams was again summoned to the Boston court. He answered that he was not able to attend. A captain by the name of Underhill was then sent to Salem with a small sailing-vessel to bring the ringleader back with him. He landed in the town and made his way to the home of the man he sought. A patient, kindly woman appeared. Was her husband at home? No. Where was he, then? She did not know. How long had he been gone? Three whole days.

Captain Underhill returned to Boston without Roger Williams,

CHAPTER V

"A CORNER FOR THE PERSECUTED"

ROGER WILLIAMS now faced an unknown, untried future. He had left family and home comforts behind and there was every prospect of suffering, hardship, possible hunger ahead. He must either wander afoot through the snow-covered, trackless forests or undertake an uncertain voyage by sea. The latter course was altogether too risky. By skirting the coast, he was liable to run into the very men who were seeking him.

Whither should he turn? Who would befriend him? There was not much choice in the matter. He must find shelter with friendly Indians. There were four persons who either shared his adventures from the start or else joined him soon after he left Salem—William Harris, John Smith, a miller of Dorchester who was, like Roger Williams, banished from the colony, and

two youths, Francis Wickes and Thomas Angell.

The record of those winter months is very brief, for Roger Williams had no idea he was making history. But suppose we let him tell the story in his own words:

"When I was unkindly and un-Christianly, as I believe, driven from my house and land and wife and children, (in the midst of a New England winter, now about thirty-five years past,) at Salem, that ever-honored Governor, Mr. Winthrop, privately wrote to me to steer my course to Narragansett Bay and Indians, for many high and heavenly and public ends encouraging me, from the freeness of the place from any English claims or patents. I took his prudent motion as a hint and voice from God, and waiving all other thoughts and motions, I steered my course from Salem (though in winter snow, which I feel yet) unto these parts, wherein I may say Peniel, that is, I have seen the face of God."

The first place which the wanderer decided upon as a good location for a new home was a spot on the east bank of the

Seekonk River. The land, while included in Plymouth territory, was obtained from Massasoit, the Wampanoag sachem, whom Roger Williams considered the true owner. It seemed a favorable stopping-place. Here, during the mild spring days, Roger Williams alternately tended his garden and worked upon his rude dwelling, all the time dreaming of the day when his good wife and babies in Salem should join him.

Alas! his plans for a permanent home here were never to be realized. No sooner were things well started when he received a friendly hint from Governor Winslow that if he wished to avoid further trouble, it would be well for him to choose another home site.

"I first pitched and began to build at Seekonk, now Rehoboth, but I received a letter from my ancient friend, Mr. Winslow, then Governor of Plymouth, professing his own and others' love and respect to me, yet lovingly advising me, since I was fallen into the edge of their bounds, and they were loath to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the water, and then, he

said, I had the country free before me, and might be as free as themselves, and we should be loving neighbors together."

Discouraging news, indeed! Was there never to be peace or rest for the banished one?

"And surely, between those, my friends of the Bay and Plymouth, I was sorely tossed for one fourteen weeks, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean, beside the yearly loss of no small matter in my trading with English and natives, being debarred from Boston, the chief mart and port of New England. God knows that many thousand pounds cannot repay the losses I have sustained."

With his face again set toward some new, unknown home, Roger Williams began reconnoitering. By this time (probably June, 1636), he had been joined by a fifth refugee from Salem, Joshua Verin—perhaps several others. One day, embarking in a canoe, Roger Williams sailed down the Seekonk River and crossed to the opposite shore. The story is told that at a jagged point, later called Slate Rock, the Indians

came down to the water's edge and greeted him with the friendly cry, "What cheer, Netop?" or, in other words, "How do you do, friend?" Kindly words, even though they came from the lips of savages! Best of all, the voyager was not asked to "move on." Was it not a good omen that in his search for a permanent home, he should be greeted first of all by the Indians with whom he had labored so faithfully and lovingly?

Whatcheer Field, in the vicinity of the rock, became the property of Roger Williams and was used by him for planting. The historic rock itself is now hidden underground back from the shore, but the spot has been marked by a monument dedicated "to the memory of Roger Williams, the Apostle of Soul Liberty." The story of the meeting of the red men and their white friend has been further preserved in the form of the city seal of Providence.

Roger Williams did not, however, build at this point. The Indians probably directed him to better land at the west where there was running water. With his companions, he investigated the situation. Pad-

This monument, erected in 1906, is dedicated "To the memory of Roger Williams, the Apostle of Soul Liberty." It is at the foot of Williams St., Providence, in Roger Williams Square, given to the city by the heirs of Governor James Fenner. A bronze bas-relief shows the landing of Roger Williams and his friends.

The monument bears these words: "Below this spot, then at the water's edge, stood the rock on which, according to tradition, Roger Williams, an exile for his devotion to freedom of conscience, landed 1636."

dling to the south, they rounded a point of land, and then turned north until they reached a river bearing the Indian name Moshassuck. At a point near a pure, bubbling spring, the little company landed, realizing that at last they had found a good abiding-place. Moving day—or, more likely, a series of moving days—followed.

It actually seemed as if the wanderer's darkest days were over and, in gratitude to God for his goodness, Roger Williams gave the quaint name of Providence to the settlement that was now begun. At first he had no intention of founding an English community. "My soul's desire was to do the natives good" are his own words, adding that he had no inclination for other company. Out of the bigness of his heart, however, he let in a few distressed souls, then welcomed a few more, until finally Providence became "a corner as a shelter for the poor and persecuted."

In regard to Roger Williams' occupation of the new land, only after he had purchased it from the Indians did he take possession. He practiced exactly what he had preached

about the simple justice of paying the natives for the land which they rightfully claimed. He was on Narragansett territory and therefore negotiated with the sachems of that tribe, Canonicus and his nephew, Miantonomo. Having mortgaged his house at Salem, he was able to make such a purchase.

Only the close friendship between Roger Williams and the Narragansett chiefs could have brought about this transfer of property thus easily. Though money and presents paid for it, still both parties looked upon it as a gift. "I was the procurer of the purchase," said Roger Williams, "not by monies nor payment, the natives being so shy and jealous, that monies could not do it; but by that language, acquaintance and favor with the natives and other advantages which it pleased God to give me. . . . Canonicus was not to be stirred with money to sell his lands to let in foreigners. 'Tis true he received presents and gratuities many of me, but it was not thousand nor ten thousands of money could have bought of him an English entrance into the Bay. . . . And,

therefore, I declare to posterity that were it not for the favor God gave me with Canonicus, none of these parts, no, not Rhode Island, had been purchased or obtained, for I never got anything out of Canonicus but by gift."

This steadfast and beautiful friendship between Roger Williams and the Narragansett sachems endured during the lifetime of all, although Canonicus was "most shy of all English to his last breath." Here were neighbors with whom there was no quarrel. They and the founder of Providence gave and took, lent and borrowed, in true neighborly fashion. Roger Williams allowed them the use of his boats, made them presents, loaned them his servant, gave them freely of his time and services whenever needed, even lodging as many as fifty natives at a time in his humble home. Was it any wonder that the "barbarous heart" of Canonicus loved him "as his son to his last gasp"?

The earliest agreements with the Narragansetts were probably by word of mouth, for the first written deed, dated two years

later, refers to territory already bought on the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. It confirms this sale and continues: "As also in consideration of the many kindnesses and services he (Roger Williams) hath continually done for us, both with our friends Massachusetts, as also as Quinickicutt (Connecticut), and Apaum or Plymouth, we do freely give unto him all that land from those rivers, reaching to Pawtuxet River, as also the grass and meadows upon the said Pawtuxet River." This old document bears the mark of Canonicus, a bow, that of Miantonomo, an arrow, and also the marks of two Indian witnesses. Thus Roger Williams could truthfully say that this land was "as truly his as any man's coat upon his back." Later, he generously divided the territory he had bought among his associates, who then numbered twelve, so that he and they each received an equal share.

In the summer of 1636, Mrs. Williams and her two small children succeeded in reaching Providence. Once more the future

looked bright to the patient husband and father.

The government of Providence was of the simplest kind. A compact was drawn up and signed by the settlers, in which they agreed to uphold every measure that was for "the public good of the body," but *"only in civil things."* What did this mean? That at last a colony was founded in which church and state were wholly independent of each other. It was precisely the sort of agreement we should expect Roger Williams to provide for the new settlement. It proclaimed to the world, "Here is a real democracy—a government by the people. Here is religious liberty without interference from the state. Here is a society in which nobody need be a church member in order to vote."

The privilege of worshiping as one pleased attracted many persons in the neighboring settlements and even across the water. As soon as they heard of Roger Williams' daring venture, they were eager to cast their lot with him.

Now while the new settlement was thus broad and reasonable, the Massachusetts

Bay Colony grew even narrower than before. Differences of opinion in church matters continued to arise, for never in the history of the world has it been possible for all men to think alike. Punishments for "heresy" were still the order of the day. Banishments were frequent. Some of the exiles thus disgraced were obliged to seek new homes as Roger Williams had done.

Among these were William Coddington and John Clarke, a learned physician, both of whom had much to do with the history of the new colony afterwards. With the help of Roger Williams, the new-comers purchased the island of Aquidneck in Narragansett Bay from Canonicus and Miantonomo. It was this island, later called Rhode Island, that gave its name to the state. The Indians then residing on the island agreed to vacate in return for ten coats and twenty hoes.

Another exile from the Bay Colony was Mrs. Anne Hutchinson, a woman of brilliant and wonderful mind, who had offended the magistrates for holding firmly to certain religious opinions and teaching the same.

She joined the little Aquidneck settlement and as long as she remained there, enjoyed peace and freedom from persecution.

To return to the colony at Providence. It was an experiment in every sense of the word. For one thing, mere existence was to prove a struggle. Life was hard and crude. The early settlers were unfitted, in many ways, to meet the difficulties of building up a new community. Few were skilled laborers, all were poor. Men of professional training were unknown. No doctor's sign was in evidence and for many years, whenever medical advice or medicine was needed, Roger Williams had to send outside the settlement for it.

Land was plentiful, it is true, but scarcely anything else. Yet one early precaution taken by Roger Williams did much to lessen the hardships of those first years. He and Governor Winthrop purchased the island of Prudence in the Bay as a grazing-place for goats and swine. Twenty fathom of wampum and two coats was the price paid. Roger Williams' curious description pictures it as "spectacle-wise and between a

mile or two in circuit." This transaction plainly showed his tact as well as the high esteem in which he was held by Canonicus. It seems that the sachem wished to reserve half of the island, but was anxious to have Roger Williams for a neighbor. Two short extracts from Roger Williams' correspondence with Winthrop tell the whole story of the proceedings that followed. In the first letter, he wrote, "I think if I go over, I shall obtain *the whole"*; the second letter records simply, "I have bought and paid for the island."

The purchase indicated good judgment and foresight, for here the live stock could not stray far, it had good pasturage, and was conveniently near salt marshes, which were necessary to keep it in the best condition. As one writer has put it, Prudence Island was the stock-farm and market-garden of Providence, supplies being carried back and forth by canoes.

The early "home lots" of the Providence settlers, as they were called, extended from the main or Town Street eastward, up a steep hill, and over back in the direction of

the Seekonk. They were generous in size, at least five acres in extent, large enough for house, garden, orchard and burial plot. Roger Williams' house was not far from the spring where he landed. In modern Providence it is hard to find any trace of the early village that was started on the banks of the Moshassuck, yet now and then a voice out of the past takes one back over the centuries to the Providence of Roger Williams. The main thoroughfare still runs through the heart of the city and on an ancient building in the street is a tablet bearing the legend, brief but thrilling with history: "Under this house still flows the Roger Williams spring."

Hospitality and neighborliness were common in early Providence days, for everybody was dependent upon everybody else. Roger Williams and his good wife kept open house for all. Now they took in a sick soldier and nursed him back to health and strength, once they sheltered an Indian with a hurt foot, and even went so far as to allow Miantonomo to hold his "barbarous court" under their roof!

The Indians, in fact, early found a way to the Williams door. They frequently came with messages from the other colonies or carried letters from Roger Williams to his neighboring friends. These were often accompanied by simple gifts, such as some chestnuts from Mrs. Williams for Mrs. Winthrop or a Narragansett-woven basket for the same lady from the Indian wife of Miantonomo. The carriers themselves were always rewarded, of course. Roger Williams must have kept on hand an extra supply of coats, trousers, tools and trinkets to satisfy their eager, childish desires.

Besides the struggle for a living, there were other matters which gave the founder of Providence great concern. We should like to record that his followers lived in peace and harmony, that there was never any discord, that they showed the Bay Colony they were well-behaved, ideal neighbors. This would not be true history, however. The colonists were only human. Besides, not all were able to understand the real meaning of the advanced principles for which their leader stood. They mistook lib-

erty for license. Quarrels arose from time to time and disturbances were sometimes caused by troublesome persons who would be called "cranks" to-day. Still the colony was bound to outgrow these petty differences. No settlement in the New World had a better right to a successful future, for none was built upon a truer, surer foundation.

CHAPTER VI

THE PEQUOT WAR

SHORTLY after the founding of Providence, Roger Williams had an opportunity to show the people of the Massachusetts Bay Colony what he thought of them. It was in his power to seriously injure them; to "pay them back," as it were, for all he had suffered at their hands. Instead, with his usual sweetness of disposition, he returned good for evil, "good measure, pressed down, and running over." For injustice, he had nothing but forgiveness, for ill-treatment, only love and service. It required true nobility of character to act as he did.

Grave danger threatened all New England at this time—the possibility of a widespread Indian outbreak. In reality, it was more than a possibility—it was almost a certainty. Already there had been several indications that the savages meant to make trouble. Of all the neighboring tribes,

the colonists had most to fear from the Pequots. These were a powerful and dreaded people who occupied territory at the west of the Narragansetts in what is now the eastern part of Connecticut. Some time before this, they had been suspected of having a hand in the murder of a number of white traders on the Connecticut River. Now, the same year that Roger Williams' new settlement was begun, another English trader, John Oldham by name, was killed off Block Island under circumstances similar to those of the first outrage.

At this point Roger Williams comes into the story. He sent news of the tragedy to Governor Vane of Massachusetts Bay and thus hastened the preparations of that colony to protect itself. A force under the command of the doughty John Endicott was sent into the Pequot country to bring the natives to terms. The Massachusetts men inflicted losses by burning wigwams and destroying crops, but failed to punish with any degree of thoroughness. The expedition had but one effect—to madden the Pequots to further activity.

A feeling of alarm and insecurity spread throughout all the settlements. The Indians had signed treaties, it is true, but it was no longer safe to trust their word. There was reason to think that the enmity of the Pequots was only the first step toward a general massacre. To better carry out their purposes, the Indians tried to form an alliance with their near neighbors and former enemies, the Narragansetts.

What could be done? Who had influence enough to break up this proposed league—to turn the friendship of the Narragansetts from their red neighbors to their white neighbors? One man, and one only, possessed that power. He was the "dangerous" founder of Providence, who had been turned out of Massachusetts in disgrace.

In spite of this fact, the magistrates of the Bay Colony lost no time in appealing to Roger Williams to save them. He responded promptly, willingly. The story of his perilous mission among the Narragansetts reads more like a chapter from some exciting book of imaginary adventure than sober history:

"The Lord helped me immediately to put my life into my hand, and, scarce acquainting my wife, to ship myself, all alone in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind, with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the sachem's house. Three days and nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors, whose hands and arms, methought, reeked with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on Connecticut River, and from whom I could not but nightly look for their bloody knives at my own throat also. God wondrously preserved me, and helped me to break to pieces the Pequots' negotiation and design, and to make, promote and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansetts and Mohegans against the Pequots."

So successfully indeed did Roger Williams risk his life that in the autumn of that same year a party of Narragansetts, including Miantonomo, journeyed to Boston to form a treaty with the English. Among other things, it provided for a peace between

the Narragansetts and the colonists and contained a promise that neither party should make peace with the Pequots without the other's consent, or that, in case of war, due notice should be given. The old records say that after the treaty was concluded, the visiting Indians were given a dinner, then "conveyed out of town by some musketeers and dismissed with a volley of shot."

Still the matter was not entirely closed, for the colonists, lacking a thorough knowledge of the Indian tongue, could not make the Narragansetts understand certain parts of the compact, which was written in English. An interpreter was needed, so a copy of the treaty was sent to Roger Williams that he might clearly and simply explain it to the Narragansetts. He might be a dangerous neighbor, but he was certainly a most convenient one!

The Pequot War took place, after all, but without the alliance of the Narragansetts. Instead of resulting in the wholesale destruction of the whites, it marked the doom of the tribe which was foolhardy enough to attempt it. The three colonies, Massachu-

setts, Plymouth and Connecticut, united to crush the Indian menace.

A detachment from the Bay Colony in charge of General Stoughton marched to Connecticut by way of Providence. Roger Williams hospitably entertained them, giving the visitors of his best. Poor Mrs. Williams must have been put to her utmost resources to act as hostess to one hundred and twenty soldiers! As they continued on their way, Roger Williams accompanied them some distance in order to bring about a meeting with their allies, the Narragansetts, and so establish good feeling.

Under Captain John Mason, the Connecticut settlers, aided by both English and Indian allies, surprised the Pequots at Fort Mystic, May, 1637, and with fire and sword, practically wiped them out in an hour's time. A swamp battle soon afterwards completed the extermination of this once brave and valiant tribe. The few who escaped were distributed as captives. The very name Pequot disappeared from the map of the Connecticut country. The Pequot River became the Thames and the

town of that name was changed to New London.

During the Pequot War and the period just preceding it, Roger Williams was kept busy. No one could give better advice than he at this time, aided as he was by his friendliness with the Narragansetts. He became, in fact, a news agency, continually sending the latest bits of information to Massachusetts and in other ways serving as a valuable go-between. He kept the English informed of the Pequots' designs as far as he knew them and once submitted a rude map showing the positions of the Indians.

He occupied himself, too, with another matter—keeping the Narragansett sachem, Canonicus, in good humor. In one of the interesting old letters of Roger Williams written to his friends at the Bay, he tells how he "sweetened the spirit" of the aged chieftain in a very literal way. The superstitious Canonicus, it seems, had blamed the English for sending the plague among his people, but Roger Williams convinced him of his mistake and then requested some sugar for the sachem. "I find," said he,

"that Canonicus would gladly accept of a box of eight or ten pounds of sugar, and indeed he told me he would thank Mr. Governor for a box full."

There was great rejoicing throughout New England when the Pequots were finally disposed of. A day of solemn thanksgiving and rejoicing was appointed in Massachusetts, the successful warriors were feasted, and services held in all the churches. And what reward was given the man who, more than anybody else, had saved his countrymen from a dreadful massacre by winning over the Narragansetts? Winthrop and others debated whether it would not be well to recall him from banishment or show some other mark of favor. Nothing came of the discussion. The decree of banishment remained in force and not so much as a vote of thanks was given Roger Williams.

Still the main thought in his tender heart at this time seems to have been that too much severity had been used in dealing with the Pequots. "I fear that some innocent blood cries at Connecticut," he wrote his

friend Winthrop. Again, when hands of the vanquished Indians were sent to Boston and few, if any, of the Bay people protested against this horrible custom, Roger Williams once more raised his voice. He feared "those dead hands were no pleasing sight" and regretted that he could not have prevented such a display of barbarism without offending the Indians. "I have always shown dislike," he added, "to such dismembering the dead."

After the war, Roger Williams repeatedly acted as peace-maker in lesser differences between the English and the natives. To all he meted out the same measure of fairness and justice. If the Indians inflicted injuries, he demanded that they "make good" with the whites; if it was the whites who ill-treated the Indians, he was no less insistent that they do the right thing in turn. No grievance of the red men was too trivial for him to investigate. Thus he straightened out a matter of some missing kettles and a disputed canoe, concerning which Miantonomo's feelings had been hurt,

with all the seriousness he would have given a matter of state.

One interesting event of the year 1638 that meant much to Roger Williams was the birth of his oldest son. He was the first male child born within the limits of the new colony and was therefore named Providence after the settlement his father had founded. An appropriate name, surely, but what a curious one for a poor child to carry around!

There is no record that any church building existed in the earliest days of Providence. Poverty may have been one reason for this lack. Meetings were held in different homes, however, and as Roger Williams was the only ordained minister, he conducted the services. There was no persecution for non-attendance—of that we may be sure. Among the people who came to Providence because they could not enjoy their religion unmolested elsewhere, were the Anabaptists or Baptists, as their name was shortened in later years. Their views were much more liberal and attractive than strict Puritanism and therefore interested Roger Williams. He allowed one of their

number, Ezekiel Holliman, to baptize him in the new faith and he then baptized Holliman and several others. For this public profession, Roger Williams and his wife were excommunicated from the Salem church. He is generally regarded as the first pastor of the Baptist Church, but he was not actively connected with it for more than a few months. No doctrine of the day could quite satisfy a man of his open mind and earnest determination to search for the truth. He became what was then known as a "seeker."

The Baptists, however, continued to prosper and increase in numbers. They still claim Roger Williams as the founder of the First Baptist Church of America. The ancient meeting-house bearing that name (though it is not the original edifice of the society) has a bell with a quaint inscription which proclaims to the world the principles upon which both the city and the Baptist congregation were founded:

"For freedom of conscience the town was first planted,
Persuasion, not force, was used by the people;

The First Baptist Church of Providence is a dignified and venerable white structure on North Main Street, the "Town Street" of Roger Williams' day. It is modeled after St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. Its bell still rings the curfew at nine o'clock each evening.

The First Baptist Society, the first in America, was founded in 1638, and met either in the open air or at the homes of its members during the first sixty-two years of its existence. Roger Williams is generally considered the first pastor of the church.

This church is the eldest and has not recanted,
Enjoying and granting bell, temple, and steeple."

To rightly understand the last line, we must know that in England in the seventeenth century those worshippers who had separated from the established church had neither bell, temple nor steeple. This is only another instance of the liberal spirit of the early inhabitants of Providence.

CHAPTER VII

THE INDIAN KEY

As we have seen, the Indians had much to do with Roger Williams' history from the very beginning of his life in the New World. He had lodged with them, befriended them, studied their language, traded with them, and had been their interpreter. All this was of benefit to both natives and colonists.

In 1643, another opportunity came for Roger Williams to be of still further service to his countrymen and their red neighbors. An important mission (about which we will speak later) took him to England that year and he made the most of the leisure afforded by the long sea voyage to put into book form what he had learned about the Indian language and customs. "I drew the materials," he explained, "in a rude lump at sea, that I might not lightly lose what I had so dearly bought in some few years' hardship."

Roger Williams' purpose was to bring about a closer relation between the whites

and the natives. He believed they could be mutually helpful if the book were used as a guide.

"A little key may open a box where lies a bunch of keys. . . . One candle will light ten thousand, and it may please God to bless a little leaven to season the mighty lump of those peoples and territories."

The work was published in London before the close of the year under an odd and lengthy title which indicated that the labor put into it was at least thorough. It was called "A Key into the Language of America; or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England. Together, with brief Observations of the Customs, Manners and Worships, etc. of the aforesaid Natives, in Peace and War, in Life and Death. On all which are added Spiritual Observations, General and Particular by the Author, of chief and special use (upon all occasions,) to all the English Inhabiting those parts; yet pleasant and profitable to the view of all men." Let us hope that the persons who asked for the volume in the London book-

shops did not attempt to give the title word for word!

No man of that day was better fitted to undertake such a task as the writing of the Indian Key than Roger Williams, for no man had lived so intimately with the New England Indians. The quaint book is to-day considered very valuable and very precious among book-lovers. Of course most of the history concerns the Narragansetts particularly, but Roger Williams also made use of the knowledge he had gained from other tribes.

Suppose we take a few peeps into this fascinating old volume, for nowhere can we find a better picture of the author's "barbarians." We notice, first, that it is made up something like a dictionary. On the left side of each page are the Indian words and phrases and, on the right, their meaning in English. But what a difficult dictionary! Think of mastering such mouth-filling words as "Muckquachuckquêmese" or "Maumashinnaunamaùta." Only the patience of a Roger Williams could ever have discovered that such enigmas meant "a little

boy" and "Let us make a good fire." It is interesting to know that the very first phrase in the book is the familiar "What cheer, Netop?" or the first greeting that reached Roger Williams' ears in the land of the Narragansetts. Besides explaining the commoner expressions of the Indians, the author includes notes about their life and habits. At the close of each chapter are a few lines of simple, crude verse that sounds for all the world like the pointed sermons with which good old-fashioned stories used to end.

As to the religion of the Indians, Roger Williams tells his readers that he has been given the names of thirty-seven different gods which they solemnly worship. Among these, Cautantouwit, the great god of the southwest, was a general favorite. From his field came their corn and beans and it is to his abode their souls will go at death, provided they have lived good lives. All murderers, thieves and liars, on the other hand, must wander restlessly abroad. Besides Cautantouwit, many other gods are mentioned, such as the Eastern, Western,

Northern and Southern Gods, the House God, the Woman's God, the Children's God, the Sun and the Moon Gods, and the Fire God.

"The Indians find the sun so sweet,
He is a god, they say;
Giving them light and heat and fruit,
And guidance all the day.

"They have no help of clock or watch,
And sun they overprize.
Having those artificial helps, the sun
We unthankfully despise."

The superstitions of the Indians were many and curious, as is seen by the following: Though crows frequently stole their corn, yet scarcely one native in a hundred would put them to death. Why? Because they firmly believed that the crow first brought them a grain of Indian corn in one ear and an Indian bean in the other from Cautantouwit's field. Another superstition was their childlike faith in the power of their priests and conjurers to work cures. To Roger Williams' way of thinking, these "wise men" did nothing but "howl and roar" over them.

Still, Roger Williams, always just, took care to record the good points of the natives as well as their failings. This was unlike many Englishmen of his time, who looked down upon the savages as little better than animals. For one thing, hospitality was a common virtue among them. Had it not been so, Roger Williams could never have found for his book such a list of friendly expressions as "Warm you," "Sit by the fire," "Come hither, friend," "Come in," "I thank you," "I thank you for your kind remembrance," and "I thank you for your love."

"The courteous pagan shall condemn
Uncourteous Englishmen,
Who live like foxes, bears and wolves,
Or lion in his den.

"Let none sing blessings to their souls,
For that they courteous are:
The wild barbarians with no more
Than nature, go so far.

"If Nature's sons both wild and tame,
Humane and courteous be,
How ill becomes it sons of God
To want humanity!"

Again, Roger Williams tells us, "If any stranger come in, they presently give him to eat of what they have; many a time, and at all times of the night (as I have fallen in travel upon their houses) when nothing hath been ready, have themselves and their wives risen to prepare me some refreshing. In summer time I have known them lie abroad often themselves, to make room for strangers, English or others."

"I have known them leave their house and mat
To lodge a friend or stranger,
When Jews and Christians off have sent
Christ Jesus to the manger."

Family affection and loyalty were strong in the Indian, while drunkenness was an almost unknown vice. As for such crimes as robbery and murder, Roger Williams says that the red men have as good, if not a better, record than their white neighbors. In war, too, the example set by the English was hardly what we would expect from a superior race:

"The Indians count of men as dogs,
It is no wonder then:

They tear out one another's throats!
But now that Englishmen,

"That boast themselves God's children and
Members of Christ to be,
That they should thus break out in flames,
Sure 'tis a mystery!"

Roger Williams gave the natives credit, too, for being punctual. "They are punctual in their promises of keeping time; and sometimes have charged me with a lie for not punctually keeping time, though hindered."

The Indians were exceedingly fond of news. So eager were they to learn what was going on around them that if any stranger was able to satisfy their curiosity in their own language, they called him a god. Forming a circle about the news-bringer and silently puffing at their pipes, they would listen with deep attention to what he had to say.

Being children of nature and living mostly in the open, they were far better acquainted with the outdoor world than were their white neighbors. Their five senses were trained to a wonderful degree and

they were intimately familiar with the sun and moon, the winds and weather.

> "The very Indian boys can give
> To many stars their name,
> And know their course and therein do
> Excel the English tame."

A good description of the Indian home is furnished by Roger Williams. It consisted of long poles covered and lined with mats. Those on the inside were embroidered by the women and took the place of hangings. Mats often formed doors, too, though birch and chestnut bark and even English boards and nails were sometimes used for this purpose. A large opening in the middle of the house served as a chimney. "Two families will live comfortably and lovingly in a little round house of some fourteen or sixteen foot over."

The principal occupations of the Indian braves were hunting, fishing, trading, and the manufacture of canoes, bows and arrows. They raised some tobacco, but left the planting and tending of other crops wholly to their women folk. Tobacco was

highly valued as a preventative against toothache. While the Indians generally bore torture uncomplainingly, a jumping tooth would make a coward of the bravest. Says Roger Williams, "The toothache is the only pain which will force their stout hearts to cry."

Canoes were fashioned from pine, oak and chestnut trees. After being felled, the trees were burned and hewed into shape. A single Indian working by himself in the forest could finish and launch his boat within ten or twelve days. Some of the larger canoes were big enough to hold thirty or forty men. That they were not always the safest craft for white men is shown by Roger Williams' story:

"It is wonderful to see how they will venture in those canoes, and how (being oft overset as I have myself been with them) they will swim a mile, yea, two or more, safe to land. I having been necessitated to pass waters divers times with them, it hath pleased God to make them many times the instruments of my preservation: and when sometimes in great danger I have questioned

safety, they have said to me, 'Fear not, if we be overset, I will carry you safe to land.' "

As to food, parched meal seems to have been their main article of diet, mixed with either hot or cold water. A little basket of meal was commonly carried on the back or in a hollow leather girdle. This would last for three or four days.

There was also natural food at hand, of which the Indians made good use. The strawberry was greatly prized. To quote from the "Key":

"This berry is the wonder of all the fruits growing naturally in those parts. In some parts where the natives have planted, I have many times seen as many as would fill a good ship within few miles' compass. The Indians bruise them in a mortar and mix them with meal and make strawberry bread." The natives were also very fond of a dish made of meal and dried currants ground to a powder which was "as sweet to them as plum or spice cake to the English."

Another natural source of food was the clam-beds, for which New England, and

Rhode Island especially, has always been famous. Listen to Roger Williams' description of the clam:

"This is a sweet kind of shell-fish, which all Indians generally over the country, winter and summer, delight in, and at low water the women dig for them. This fish and the natural liquor of it they boil and it makes their broth and their bread seasonable and savory, instead of salt."

The Indian wampum, made from shells found along the shores of New England, took the place of money. Six small white beads, or three black ones, were equal to one English penny.

These glimpses into the Indian "Key" give us a little idea of Roger Williams' friends among the Narragansetts and other tribes. Here and there in the book are hints of his kindly dealings with these savages. One story tells how he gladly went two miles out of his way to visit a Connecticut Indian on his death-bed. The dying brave told Roger Williams he had never forgotten the words in which he had preached the religion of the

white men, then added pitifully, "Me so big naughty heart, me heart all one stone!"

In another place, Roger Williams referred to Canonicus, sachem of the Narragansetts and his steadfast friend, as "a wise and peaceable prince." He tells us how he had hard work to overcome Canonicus' suspicions of the English. To show he had cause to doubt the word of the whites, the Indian chief picked up a stick and broke it in ten pieces—one piece for each time the English had been untrustworthy. It is not necessary to add that Roger Williams did his best to so improve conditions that the Indians could put greater trust in the colonists.

The printer who published the "Key into the Language of America" was Gregory Dexter. He early emigrated to Providence and became a leading citizen of the little colony and also remained a "dear and faithful friend" of Roger Williams.

CHAPTER VIII

IN QUEST OF THE CHARTER

THERE was no doubt about it. The little settlement of Providence was in disgrace—deep disgrace. Massachusetts could forgive neither Roger Williams for his unheard-of opinions nor his companions who helped him found the colony based upon such dangerous principles.

She showed her displeasure in several ways. First, she frowned upon all residents of Providence who came within her borders. If they still held that the magistrates were unjust and that Roger Williams had been persecuted, they were politely invited to turn back home and threatened with imprisonment should they repeat the offence. Another effect of the Bay Colony's severity was loss of trade, resulting in actual hardship for the Providence settlers. As supplies from England were received at Boston, little Providence was badly handicapped in

securing the necessities of life. She must either depend upon the more distant port of New Amsterdam or go without.

As for Roger Williams himself, Massachusetts obstinately refused to let him touch her territory under any conditions. It is hard to understand such a spirit of narrowness and ingratitude after the noble part he had played in the Pequot War. Still he continued to help Massachusetts on any and every occasion when his knowledge of the Indians and their language could be of service. They, as repeatedly, kept on accepting his kindnesses without, however, annulling his decree of banishment. The following incident shows this in striking fashion:

At one time the Massachusetts people became suspicious of Miantonomo, thinking that he had entered into a league with the Mohawks against them. Thereupon, they summoned him to Boston to give an account of himself. The Narragansett sachem was perfectly willing to go—on one condition. This was that Roger Williams might be his companion. Well did the shrewd savage

know that if his trusted friend had a part in the proceedings, right and justice would prevail. Such would have been the case, but Roger Williams was not given a chance to say a word for either side. He was under sentence of banishment. How, then, could he be allowed to accompany Miantonomo? The proposed meeting failed to take place.

Whenever a disturbance arose in Roger Williams' colony, Massachusetts was only too ready to cry out triumphantly, "I told you so! This absurd theory of the separation of church and state is not working out any better than we thought it would!" John Winthrop solemnly recorded in his Journal, "At Providence, also, the devil was not idle." What Roger Williams' critics were too short-sighted to see was that the trouble lay, not with his principles, which were sane and sound, but with his companions' misunderstanding of them. The Apostle of Soul Liberty was far ahead of the age in which he lived.

The time came when this attitude of Massachusetts threatened Providence with very real dangers. We are sorry to say that

not all the trouble in the infant colony came from without, however. A few settlers at Pawtuxet, near Providence, though occupying land over which Massachusetts had no claim, placed themselves under her protection. It was the very opportunity the Bay Colony had been seeking to extend her sway. Providence, having no government, had no right to exist, she argued. Frankly she acknowledged that Pawtuxet was worth taking over. Was it wise to neglect any chance that would serve as a wedge to further extension of territory?

John Winthrop himself had the honesty to reveal Massachusetts' real motives back of her protection of the Pawtuxet malcontents:

"This we did partly to draw in the rest in those parts, either under ourselves or Plymouth, who now lived *under no government,* but grew very offensive, and the place was likely to be of use to us, especially if we should have occasion of sending out against any Indians of Narragansett and likewise for an outlet into the Narragansett Bay, and seeing it came without our seeking, and

would be no charge to us, we thought it not wisdom to let it slip."

For a while, the outlook was most discouraging for the struggling settlement at the head of Narragansett Bay. Things went from bad to worse. The climax was reached when, in the spring of 1643, Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven joined to form "The United Colonies of New England." Providence and Aquidneck were left out. The chief purpose of the federation was mutual protection against the natives. The Pequot War, while it had broken the power of one dreaded tribe, had not settled all the Indian troubles of New England. Every now and then rumors of new dangers spread from settlement to settlement. As in former years, a general massacre of white settlers was feared. There was now a likelihood that such an attempt might be more successful than before, for the Indians had been receiving firearms from English traders.

The league was based, then, upon the principle that in union there is strength. Two commissioners from each colony (both

of whom must be church members) were elected to meet once a year to discuss the questions of war and peace that affected the general welfare of New England. The Narragansett Bay settlements would have been glad to send their representatives, too, but were not allowed to do so. At first the New England federation claimed it was because Providence had no charter. This could not have been the real reason, for when this obstacle ceased to exist, the colony was still refused admission.

It is easy to see that it was thus placed in an extremely dangerous position. It was isolated, could hope for no co-operation from its neighbor colonies and was in constant dread of Indian outbreaks. What were the little frozen-out settlements to do? In some way they must make a place for themselves in this unfriendly New England, and that speedily. They must, in some way, make their neighbors respect them—yes, and keep their hands off of them. Their very existence was imperiled.

There was only one course open. Acting on the same principle as their more for-

tunate neighbors, they decided to unite and to make that union firm and lasting by appealing to England for a charter. The man best suited to undertake this delicate mission was, of course, Roger Williams, and he was appointed to visit the mother-country for this purpose.

At the time he sailed (June, 1643), the principal Narragansett Bay settlements were Providence, those on the island of Aquidneck—Portsmouth and Newport—and the infant settlement of Warwick. During the seven years of its existence, Providence had continued to stand boldly for religious freedom. Aquidneck, too, while entirely separate from her sister colony, had been liberal from the beginning, as is shown by her court record of 1641, "that liberty of conscience in point of doctrine is perpetuated."

Roger Williams would have preferred to engage passage from Boston, but once more the Massachusetts authorities refused to let him enter their territory. He therefore decided to embark from New Amsterdam. Many persons in that Dutch settlement had

reason to be thankful for the happy providence that sent him their way. A fierce Indian uprising was in progress, due largely to the ill-treatment of the savages by the whites. Roger Williams' fame must have gone before him, for the settlers pleaded with him to save them. With his usual gracious willingness, he became peace-maker and with his customary success. Unhappily, many frightful tragedies had already occurred. Among these was the murder of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and members of her family who had moved from Aquidneck to the Dutch colony.

The long, uncertain voyage that lay ahead of Roger Williams was most unlike the rapid crossings made in our modern luxurious ocean steamers that can calculate almost to an hour the length of the journey. Heavy seas, storms, contrary winds all had to be taken into account. Realizing the delay that might thus be caused, our traveler used his leisure to put together the Indian "Key," as we have seen.

It was a very different England which Roger Williams found in 1643 from that

which he had left thirteen years before. Then royalty and bishops had been triumphant; now the king was a fugitive and the Star Chamber a thing of the past. The country was passing through a dreadful civil war. Parliament was fighting for its rights, long trampled upon, and it was a question whether that body or the king would win out in the end. The struggle was for both civil and religious freedom. Disturbed though the kingdom was, it was the very best occasion for Roger Williams to present his request. Parliament needed all the friends it could get on both sides of the water. It therefore listened with attention to what he had to say.

Without question Roger Williams numbered among his friends the most powerful men of England at this time—Oliver Cromwell, Sir Henry Vane, the former governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and perhaps Milton. They greeted the pioneer from over-seas with hearty welcome. Their warm friendship must have meant much to the outcast from Massachusetts. But his patient heart must have been filled with a

still greater joy when a commission appointed by Parliament granted his colony the much-desired charter. Massachusetts' cold disapproval might continue, but the Narragansett settlements were on their feet at last! They had a future. Their star, slow in rising, was now above the horizon.

During his stay in London, Roger Williams attended to other matters besides the procuring of the charter. Often his own personal concerns were pushed aside for the sake of others. The poor of the city were enduring great suffering due to a lack of coal, for the war had interfered with mining. Wood was very expensive. Roger Williams made it his business to do what he could to obtain fuel and so lessen the distress around him.

In addition, he made use of every spare moment to write a great work on toleration bearing the rather startling title of "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution," which was put together "in variety of strange houses, sometimes in the fields, in the midst of travel." It was in answer to a letter of his old antagonist, John Cotton. Going back a

step further, this letter had been called forth by a pamphlet on persecution composed by a prisoner of Newgate. Being denied writing materials, he had substituted milk for ink, and for paper, had used the wrappings of the milk bottles brought him. Such writings, he knew, would, upon the application of heat, become legible. To "the arguments against persecution *in milk*," Roger Williams now wrote "the answer in blood." He was on familiar ground, and with clear logic, good sense and strong English, he shaped his ideas on religious liberty. Such a book had never before been published. Truth and Peace are represented as discussing this all-important subject.

"In what dark corner of the world, sweet Peace," begins Truth, "are we two met? How hath the present evil world banished me from all the coasts and quarters of it? And how hath the righteous God in judgment taken thee from the earth?"

" 'Tis lamentably true, blessed Truth," answers Peace, "the foundations of the world have long been out of course. . . . With what a wearied, tired wing have I

flown over nations, kingdoms, cities, towns, to find out precious Truth."

"The like inquiries," says Truth, "in my flights and travels have I made for Peace, and still am told she hath left the earth and fled to Heaven."

"Dear Truth," then exclaims Peace, "what is the earth but a dungeon of darkness where Truth is not?"

In less fanciful language, arguments are given to show that neither laws nor civil magistrates should have authority over a man's soul. Roger Williams did not mean any disrespect to his old friend, John Cotton, by thus openly taking opposite sides with him. This he explained years afterwards in a courteous letter to Cotton's son. He was too tender-hearted to offend even his enemies. Besides, public controversies were very popular in Roger Williams' day.

The book was dedicated to Parliament, but, unfortunately, the House of Commons was so far from comprehending and appreciating its worth, that it rather childishly ordered that it be burnt. As if in such sim-

ple fashion truth could be wiped from the earth!

The charter obtained by Roger Williams provided that "Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England" should be given "full power and authority to rule themselves and such others as shall hereafter inhabit within any part of the said tract of land, by such a form of civil government as by voluntary consent of all, or the greater part of them, they shall find most suitable to their estate and condition, provided that the said laws, constitutions and punishments for the civil government of the said plantations be conformable to the laws of England, as far as the nature and constitution of the place will admit." It was a most liberal document, without a single word about restricting liberty in religious matters.

The obtaining of this charter meant an outlay in actual money of one hundred pounds, or five hundred dollars. Roger Williams had generously disposed of some of his land in order to raise ready money to carry through the project. This debt was

not collected without considerable trouble and delay. The colonists, having secured their object, did not seem over-anxious to pay the bill.

The question suggests itself: How had Roger Williams been able to make such a complete success of his mission in England? There were several reasons—among them, the desire of Parliament to make and keep friends in New England, as has been mentioned. But listen. In a letter sent by Roger Williams from leading noblemen and members of Parliament to Massachusetts, we find these words: "As also of his *great industry and travels in his printed Indian labors* in your parts (the like whereof we have not seen extant from any part of America) and in which respect it hath pleased both Houses of Parliament to grant unto him, and friends with him, a free and absolute charter of civil government for those parts of his abode." The writers of the letter did not hesitate to use very plain language in expressing their disapproval of the lack of harmony and neighborliness that had marked the dealings between Massa-

chusetts and Roger Williams. The missive gained him the privilege of landing in Boston on his return to America in the autumn of the year 1644. There is nothing to show, however, that the colony softened her heart toward him.

The people of Providence, on the other hand, heard of the coming of their leader and prepared for him a truly royal welcome. When he landed on the banks of the Seekonk, where, not many years before, nobody had taken any interest in his doings except possibly friendly Indians, now he was met by a body of his townsmen who had turned out in fourteen canoes to greet him. Happy in the safe return of their friend and neighbor, and rejoiced to think he had come back with the precious charter, they escorted him, with hearty expressions of joy, across the river to the settlement he had founded.

CHAPTER IX

NARRAGANSETT DAYS

WHILE Roger Williams was absent in England, an event occurred at home which must have sorely grieved his kindly heart when he heard of it. This was the death of his faithful friend and ally, the sachem Miantonomo. Their friendship, as well as that between Roger Williams and Miantonomo's uncle, Canonicus, forms one of the most interesting chapters in the life of our hero. Brave, dignified, upright, true, Miantonomo could give many a church elder of his time a lesson in honor and sincerity. He deserved a far better fate at their hands than he received.

Ever since the Pequot War, there had been trouble between the Mohegans and the Narragansetts. Uncas, the powerful sachem of the former tribe, was Miantonomo's deadly rival. When, therefore, war broke out between him and an ally of Mian-

tonomo, the Narragansett sachem took part in the struggle. With a force of about a thousand men, which greatly outnumbered the Connecticut Indians, he took Uncas completely by surprise. Unhappily, Miantonomo was hindered by a heavy armor that had been loaned him and this, together with the sudden fury of Uncas' assault, cost him the day. He was taken captive to Hartford, after proudly refusing to plead for his life.

When the commissioners of the United Colonies next met, his case was put in their hands. What should be done with the silent, haughty prisoner? Should he be condemned to death or receive a lighter punishment' or—best of all—be set free? Whatever Miantonomo's faults, he had always kept faith with his white allies and, remembering his treaty at the time of the Pequot War, had even asked permission of Massachusetts before attacking Uncas. The United Colonies hesitated. At length they shifted the responsibility to certain prominent ministers of the gospel. Surely they would be lenient. Without question

they would grant him life and freedom. *Death!* With one voice they pronounced the awful sentence.

It is not difficult to imagine the savage joy with which Uncas received his hated foe back again. As Miantonomo was led forth from Hartford, one of Uncas' men stole up behind him and felled him to the ground with a single blow of a hatchet. This heartless murder—for it can be called nothing less—will always remain a dark blot on the history of early New England. If only Roger Williams had been at home! No doubt the gloomy sachem said it to himself more than once with childlike yearning. To-day, nearly three hundred years after the tragedy, we echo sadly, "If only Roger Williams had been at home!"

The Narragansetts did not soon overlook the cruel death of their favorite chief. They meditated revenge—deep, thorough revenge. They would have the head of Uncas, no matter what Massachusetts and the other colonies might say. Such was the state of affairs when Roger Williams returned from England. The Narragansetts actually

commenced hostilities against the Mohegans and threatened to carry the war against the white colonists as well, except those of Providence and Rhode Island, as the island of Aquidneck was now called.

Roger Williams lost no time in doing his utmost to quench "the flames of war raging next door" to him. He sent word of the plans of the Indians to a meeting of the commissioners of the United Colonies held at Boston. In consequence of this, Massachusetts decided to take up arms against the revengeful Narragansetts. Their sachem, Pessicus, Miantonomo's brother, then lost some of his former bravery. He, like Massachusetts, depended upon Roger Williams to get him out of his difficulties. He had the same unquestioning confidence in the friend of his tribe as had Miantonomo before him. The result of the whole business was that peace was arranged and the Narragansetts pledged Massachusetts two thousand fathom of wampum. A treaty was concluded which patched up the differences between the two Indian tribes and perhaps prevented, for a second time, a

widespread massacre of the whites. The credit was entirely due to Roger Williams.

But to return to the personal affairs of the great peace-maker. We must not suppose that all this time he was on the road to riches. At no time in his career does he seem to have had an abundance of worldly goods. He was obliged to work in the open, at hard manual labor, to earn a living for himself and those dependent on him. Now, upon his return from England, he found himself poorer than ever. His family numbered six children and it was a big problem to clothe and feed them properly. Their needs probably determined his next step—his removal from Providence to Cawcawmquissick or Narragansett, some twenty miles down the Bay, where he established a trading-post.

The location had its advantages. It was convenient for hunters and accessible to Newport, at which port furs could be shipped to England and needed supplies be received in return. Here, in the heart of the Narragansett country, Roger Williams passed six busy years of his life, his busi-

ness yielding him one hundred pounds annually. He planted and harvested his crops, continued to serve as mediator between the natives and the colonists, and to take an active part in the affairs of the colony.

He found at Narragansett a most congenial neighbor in the person of Richard Smith, a prosperous trader and the owner of a large estate. A fugitive from English persecution, he had resided for a time in Plymouth territory, and then, for the sake of a still more liberal atmosphere, moved to the Narragansett Bay region. His was the first English house in that section, built a few years after the settlement of Providence. Mrs. Smith was the soul of courtesy and hospitality and the Williams family was fortunate in having her and her good husband within neighborly distance.

That Roger Williams, too, was the best of neighbors, we have abundant proof. No kindly service was too small for him to undertake if he could thereby help those about him, whether English or Indian. Now he busied himself trying to find the

stray cattle of a friend, again he gave his house over to Massachusetts soldiers who had come to collect the wampum debt from the Narragansetts. The savages were continually making excuses to Roger Williams for their delay in settling the heavy account. Many of these were genuine enough, no doubt. He listened to the grievances of both sides and, as usual, poured oil on the troubled waters.

To the Narragansetts, he was friend, peace-maker, adviser, physician. They served in his household, for the early records of the province show that he was granted "leave to suffer a native, his hired household servant, to kill fowl for him in his piece at Narragansett about his house." Their bodily ailments were ever a source of care and anxiety to him. Though Providence Plantations was a temperate colony, yet Roger Williams was allowed to administer "a little wine or strong water" to the red men in their illnesses. "I might have gained thousands by that trade," he once said, "but God hath graciously given me rather to choose a dry morsel." When in need of

greater medical skill than his own, he wrote his friend, John Winthrop the younger, of Connecticut, for medicine and a "drawing plaster," adding generously, "if the charge rise to one or two crowns, I shall thankfully send it."

The lack of good physicians was still sorely felt in the colony. When the second daughter of Roger Williams became ill, he again asked Mr. Winthrop's advice—this time, as to the best doctor in Massachusetts. As late as 1660, however, Roger Williams resorted to simple remedies—of necessity, very likely—instead of consulting a doctor. When his son Joseph "was troubled with a spice of an epilepsy," he wrote, "We used some remedies, but it hath pleased God, by his taking of tobacco, perfectly, as we hope, to cure him."

Correspondence and neighborly interchange of courtesies were kept up for years between the Williams family and that of John Winthrop, Jr. The affection and kindliness of the former governor of Massachusetts for his banished friend descended to his son. "Your loving lines in this cold,

dead season"—thus began one of Roger Williams' letters to him—"were as a cup of your Connecticut cider." Once Mrs. Williams sent Mrs. Winthrop a couple of papers of pins, as this simple necessity appeared to be scarce in Connecticut. Her husband added the suggestion that if Mrs. Winthrop herself did not need them, they might "pleasure a neighbor." Writing paper seemed to be as scarce in Providence as pins were in Connecticut. One letter of Roger Williams was written on the blank side of an envelope addressed to himself by Winthrop. He crossed out his own name and wrote that of his correspondent in blacker ink.

The monotony and hard work of the Narragansett existence were enlivened now and then by the loan of a book. In this way, Roger Williams kept in touch with the latest thought in England. He eagerly read all volumes that came his way bearing upon religious subjects, but at one time he expressed an earnest desire for a geography. In turn, he supplied his friends with books from his own limited library. We are sorry

to say they were not always returned promptly. Thus he sent urgent word to Connecticut for Winthrop to recover one of these books which an Englishman of Long Island had borrowed.

During Roger Williams' residence at Narragansett, the aged chieftain Canonicus died. Honorable and just in his dealings with the colonists, always more inclined toward peace than war, he stands out in history as one of the wisest and best of New England Indians. He picked out Roger Williams as the object of his special favor. Despite extreme age, he had laid out the grounds of his neighbor's trading-house with his own hands. The two men had the deepest respect and love for each other. Nearing his end, the Narragansett chieftain sent for Roger Williams. He had a dying request to make—that he might be buried in the "cloth of free gift" that was one of many tokens of friendship from his great white friend. "So he was," recorded Roger Williams simply. Thus the "prudent and peaceable prince" was laid to rest with his fathers.

One other event marked Roger Williams' sojourn at Narragansett. A day came when exciting news spread like wildfire throughout the colony. Gold had been found—rich, precious gold—yes, and silver, too—on the island of Rhode Island. So the word went round. What a future for the poor, struggling little colony! Roger Williams, with the others, believed that a mine of wealth was in their midst and wrote in one of his letters that the ore had been tested and found genuine. The arms of England and of the Lord High Admiral were posted over the mine and nobody allowed to take possession. Unfortunately, the golden dream soon changed to drab reality. A more careful test showed that what was believed to be gold was not gold at all. The disappointed dreamers, sadder but wiser, returned to their plows to earn a living out of the soil in the old humdrum but dependable way.

What about Roger Williams' charter money all this time? The colony had voted him the hundred pounds to pay the expenses of his trip across the water, but he had not

yet collected it all. After patiently waiting several years, he gently hinted that Providence pay her share in goats!

"I have here (through God's providence) convenience of improving some goats; my request is, therefore, that if it may be without much trouble, you would be pleased to order the payment of it in cattle of that kind."

Let us hope that the "cattle" duly reached Narragansett.

CHAPTER X

THE CHARTER ON TRIAL

MEANWHILE, what of the charter itself which Roger Williams had gained at the expense of so much time and trouble? Had it succeeded in uniting the struggling settlements? Were they now a harmonious, happy family? Alas! No such miracle had occurred. In fact, two years and a half passed before any kind of union was brought about.

Finally, in May, 1647, representatives from the different towns met at Portsmouth. The larger part of the colony, however, was present at this first General Assembly. Those persons from the mainland who attended paddled to their destination in canoes. In those days the water trip from Providence to Portsmouth was looked upon as quite an undertaking, though to-day a steamer could easily make the same journey in less than two hours. The delegates from

Canonicus Bridge, Roger Williams Park, Providence, appropriately named after the Narragansett sachem who was the steadfast friend of Roger Williams.

The Betsy Williams Cottage, Roger Williams Park, Providence. It is an old-fashioned red dwelling, well covered with vines in summer, not far from the statue of Roger Williams. The cottage is appropriately furnished with Colonial relics.

Providence, including Roger Williams and his brother Robert, were bidden Godspeed by the town in words as gravely serious as might be used had the intended voyage been across the ocean:

"We commit you unto the protection and direction of the Almighty, wishing you a comfortable voyage, a happy success, and a safe return unto us again."

At this first representative meeting of the colony, a simple form of government was decided upon. It was agreed that the affairs of the province should be managed by a president, four assistants and six commissioners from each town, or tweny-four in all. Roger Williams was not chosen first president, as we might suppose, but this may have been because he declined the honor. Surely the good and faithful man deserved a rest. He did, however, serve twice as an assistant and once as deputy-president under the first charter.

The colonial body declared itself in favor of "a democratical form of government"—a truly startling novelty for the seventeenth century. Then a clear, simple code of laws

was drawn up, far milder and more just than any then in existence. They provided that while burglary and theft were punishable crimes, still the penalty should not be too extreme for poor persons who stole because of hunger. Debtors having no goods or lands with which to settle their bills were not to be sent to prison "to lie languishing to no man's advantage." The destitute and infirm were to be provided for in all the towns. No person was to be required to take an out-and-out oath, his solemn word or testimony being considered just as binding. The laws concluded thus quaintly: "And otherwise than thus what is herein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation in the name of Jehovah, their God, forever and ever."

Just how primitive was the life of these early settlers is shown in that section of the laws touching upon archery. It also gives a glimpse of the constant danger which

surrounded the pioneers of Providence Plantations.

"Forasmuch, as we are cast among the archers, and know not how soon we may be deprived of powder and shot, without which our guns will advantage us nothing; to the end also that we may come to outshoot these natives in their own bow; Be it enacted by the authority of this present Assembly, that that statute touching archery shall be revived and propagated throughout the whole colony; and that every person from the age of seventeen years to the age of seventy, that is not lame, debilitated in his body, or otherwise exempted by the colony, shall have a bow and four arrows, and shall use and exercise shooting; and every father having children shall provide for every man-child from the age of seven years, till he come to seventeen years, a bow and two arrows or shafts to induce them and to bring them up to shooting; and every son, servant, or master, thus appointed and ordered to have a bow and arrows, that shall be remiss and negligent in the observance hereof and shall be found to lack a bow and so many

arrows for the space of a month together after the last of the fourth month, commonly called June, shall forfeit three shillings and four pence; the father shall pay for the son, the master for the servant, and deduct it out of his wages."

At this first assembly, an anchor (to which later was added the motto "Hope") was chosen as the seal of the province. Appropriate emblem, indeed! Many a storm would the infant colony be called upon to battle with before being grounded firmly in good government. Never before had a group of people greater need of hope and courage than those who were trying out their "lively experiment."

A law was passed, too, forbidding the sale of firearms to the Indians under penalty of a heavy fine.

Several years passed and still Providence Plantations failed to become the settled, united colony of Roger Williams' hopes and dreams. It was a union in name only. As for the position of the founder himself, it was as if he were the head of an unruly school. The four disturbing classes, instead of act-

ing together for the good of the school, were more intent on their own little concerns and differences. The people of Providence quarreled among themselves, while Providence, Newport, Portsmouth and Warwick quarreled with one another.

It is true that certain inhabitants of Providence made an agreement that for the common good they would forget their jealousies and bickerings, but, unhappily, the very persons who signed the paper were the ones who had no need of such a pledge to begin with. The liberal, brotherly spirit of Roger Williams was plainly evident in their determination to let "love cover their differences in the grave of oblivion."

At last matters reached a crisis. William Coddington planned to detach the island of Rhode Island and the neighboring island of Conanicut from the rest of the colony and sailed for England early in 1649 to obtain a separate charter. And this even though he had been honored by being elected president of the province and owed his position in the colony largely to Roger Williams' kindness and helpfulness.

It looked very much as if Roger Williams' work would have to be done all over again, especially as Coddington returned in two years with the new charter which made him governor of the two islands in the Bay for life. Besides, the neighboring colonies still had a covetous eye on their sister colony of whom they had always disapproved. Massachusetts still claimed Pawtuxet, Plymouth declared she owned the Island of Rhode Island, while poor Warwick had been tossed back and forth between the two very much like a baseball.

Finally, Providence and Warwick had the good sense to unite and ask Roger Williams to go to England a second time to have the original charter confirmed. Portsmouth and Newport, with equally good sense, urged John Clarke, the good minister-physician of the latter town, likewise to appeal to the mother country to have the Coddington charter annulled.

Roger Williams had to be urged twice to undertake the task. The care of his sizable family and lack of money probably had much to do with his first refusal. At length,

however, he came to the conclusion that his duty to his fellow-colonists was of more importance than his own private affairs. The two towns promised to defray the expenses of the trip and to make up whatever was still owing for the former voyage.

Even so, Roger Williams sold his trading-post at Narragansett in order to finance the venture. He found a purchaser in his neighbor, Richard Smith, who paid him fifty pounds in ready money for it. There is no indication that, on the part of the seller, this was an attempt to drive a sharp bargain—far from it. The business must have been worth far more than Roger Williams realized on it, even though it was a cash transaction.

There was one thing more to be done—to "humbly pray Massachusetts that he might inoffensively and without molestation pass through her jurisdiction as a stranger for a night." The request was grudgingly granted and, in company with the Reverend John Clarke, Roger Williams for the second time set his face toward England, in November, 1651.

CHAPTER XI

THE SECOND MISSION

After Roger Williams left for London, the towns of Portsmouth and Newport submitted to the rule of Coddington, while Providence and Warwick united and continued under the old charter. They held their regular assemblies as usual, passed laws, and acted, in general, as if there were no split at all.

Many of their proceedings are of little interest to-day, but one stands out from the rest and deserves more than passing notice. The law restricting slavery, under date of May 18, 1652, was one of the very first of its kind, not alone in New England, but in the whole world. The purchase of negroes was "a common course practiced among Englishmen to that end they may have them for service or slaves forever" and white men were also held in similar bondage. Now while the idea of universal freedom was far

from the thoughts of mankind in Roger Williams' day, the step taken by his little colony was a big stride in the right direction. It provided that no "black mankind or white" should be made to serve for a longer period than ten years. "And that man that will not let them go free," the decree went on, "or shall sell them away elsewhere, to that end that they may be enslaved to others for a long time, he or they shall forfeit to the colony forty pounds."

Though Roger Williams was hundreds of miles from home at the time this slavery act was passed, it clearly shows his influence. He was always the friend of the oppressed and downtrodden. It is not likely that many offenders were found after the law became a fact. Two hundred dollars meant too heavy a fine for the poor colonist of that day to pay.

The England of Roger Williams' second visit was as disturbed as the England of his first trip. King Charles had paid a heavy price for his tyrannical injustice—the loss of his head—and the real ruler of the country was Oliver Cromwell. Backed by his well-

disciplined, well-trained, invincible army, he had swept everything before him. During Roger Williams' stay, he usurped even more power and was made the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England. It was well for Providence Plantations that it had so influential a friend at court. Cromwell was very gracious to the colony's representative, frequently having long talks with Roger Williams and asking many questions about the Narragansett province across the sea. The Indians of that section interested him especially. Roger Williams needed no urging to impart all the information he could on this topic so near his heart. Yet not even Cromwell's friendship secured a speedy settlement of the charter trouble.

The question was referred to the Council of State. Meanwhile, Roger Williams kept his colony informed from time to time as to the results of his labors. First, he wrote that the Council had given him encouragement and had decided that the charter was binding until further orders were issued. Next, he was able to send the welcome news that the Coddington charter was annulled

and that the towns were to unite as formerly. As we shall see, this was more easily said than done.

Though much had been gained, the final settlement was not yet reached. While waiting, Roger Williams had his hands full seeing to it that his struggling province across the water was not cheated out of its rights. For one thing, war broke out between the Dutch and English. Naturally, this national struggle caused less important affairs to be pushed aside for the time being. Then the friends of the charter had to fight opposition among persons of high position and influence. So the matter dragged on.

In one of his letters describing these drawbacks, Roger Williams did not forget to send his love to his Indian friends. The correspondence was not all one-sided. The people of Providence, in turn, kept Roger Williams in touch with affairs at home. Though they did not always appreciate the great, whole-souled man while he lived quietly among them, whenever they were left to their own devices, they awoke to some realization of his worth. They passed their

troubles on to him and asked his advice, as if the poor man had not already enough burdens of his own to carry! They did not stop here. They wrote an earnest letter asking him to accept the governorship of the colony for a year in case the charter should be confirmed.

A more ambitious man would eagerly have grasped the opportunity thus offered. He would have seen in it the possibility of power, influence, perhaps riches. Not so Roger Williams. In his own humble, modest way, he was content to go on as before, sacrificing his own interests for those of the colony, whether repaid for his efforts or not.

Cromwell was not the only prominent man in England with whom Roger Williams was on intimate terms. He renewed his friendship with Sir Henry Vane and was a frequent visitor at his house—either in his lodgings at Whitehall or at his beautiful country estate Belleau in Lincolnshire. This tried and true friend, having lived in both old and New England, could understand and sympathize with Roger Williams

as perhaps nobody else could. He was not only his personal friend, but a friend of the Providence colony as well. "The sheet anchor of our ship," wrote Roger Williams, "is Sir Henry, who will do as the eye of God leads him."

John Milton was another brilliant man with whom Roger Williams associated during this period. He was the secretary of the Council of State and later became world-famous as the author of "Paradise Lost." The condition of the great man at this time was pitiable. He was fast growing blind. He said of his affliction in after years:

". . . . , My light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless. . . . ."

He and Roger Williams exchanged languages, Roger Williams reading to him in Dutch and receiving in return instruction in other languages. Roger Williams' familiarity with other tongues than his own was truly remarkable. We have seen how he had studied and conquered the Indian

dialects. Now during his stay in the mother country, he practiced Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and Dutch.

The study of languages, however, was not all that occupied Roger Williams during the two years and a half that he awaited the triumph of his charter. He wrote several books and pamphlets that represent some of the best literary work of his life. It will be remembered that when in England before, he had published a book called "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution," in which he voiced his views on toleration. This was later answered by John Cotton, who, borrowing a portion of Roger Williams' title, added to it and called his work "The Bloody Tenent Washed and Made White in the Blood of the Lamb." Roger Williams could not let the matter rest here —he was too ardent an apostle of liberty of conscience.

So now he took the opportunity to get ready for publication a reply to his antagonist, this time under the overwhelming heading of "The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody by Mr. Cotton's Endeavor to Wash

it White in the Blood of the Lamb." If the controversy had been carried any further, who knows what cumbersome and unwieldy titles might not have been inflicted upon the reading public! Roger Williams, in referring to the above book in its relation to Mr. Cotton's arguments, said it had "unwashed his washings."

England at this period was divided on the question of toleration. There were those who favored only partial religious liberty, others who took the stand that Roger Williams had supported all these years—absolute soul liberty without interference from the civil power. These broad-minded men argued that the Jews, who had been persecuted time and again by the rulers of England and had been excluded from the land for several hundred years, should be allowed to live freely and peaceably in the forbidden country.

Here was a chance for Roger Williams to strike another blow at oppression. The despised race could have had no better champion. Writing in their behalf, he said:

"I humbly conceive it to be the duty of

the civil magistrate to break down that superstitious wall of separation (as to civil things) between us Gentiles and the Jews, and freely (without their asking) to make way for their free and peaceable habitation amongst us.

"As other nations, so this especially, and the kings thereof, have had just cause to fear that the un-Christian oppressions, incivilities and inhumanities of this nation against the Jews have cried to Heaven against this nation and the kings and princes of it.

"For the removing of which guilt, and the pacifying of the wrath of the Most High against this nation, and for the furthering of that great end of propagating the Gospel of Christ Jesus; It is humbly conceived to be a great and weighty duty which is upon this state, to provide (on the Jews' account) some gracious expedients for such holy and truly Christian ends."

It may be that this stand taken by Roger Williams influenced Cromwell in his later treatment of the oppressed people. Without openly welcoming them back into Eng-

land, he did, as one writer has put it, allow them to enter by the back door.

Poverty was still a heavy handicap to Roger Williams. To raise needed funds, he was not ashamed to turn to any kind of employment so long as it was honorable. Thus we read of his giving language lessons to the sons of a member of Parliament. As to his methods, they were both reasonable and interesting. There was no forcing of dry old set formulas upon his pupils to be learned by heart. Instead, he substituted what would be called to-day the "natural method"—that is, he taught those words and phrases in most common use by means of easy conversations. Happy students, to have a teacher who thought grammar rules a "tyranny"! So well did these lessons succeed that after Roger Williams returned to America, he taught his own three boys in the same way.

Once more the poor of London were his debtors. His own wants were never of so much importance as those of his neighbors. As on the previous visit, he helped supply the needy with fuel.

One episode of Roger Williams' stay in London was amusing, yet pathetic as well. All the years he had spent in New England he had not forgotten the kind friend of his youth, Sir Edward Coke. It therefore occurred to him, now that he was in his native land once more, to make inquiries after the daughter of the famous judge, Mrs. Anne Sadlier. He did so in a courteous letter, at the same time sending her one of his discourses that had recently been printed. The good lady had the rudeness to return it, saying that she read little beyond a few standard religious works. That she looked upon her father's former protegé as a dangerous advanced thinker is shown by her saying bluntly that she believed his "new lights would prove but dark lanterns." In reply, Roger Williams referred her to the volumes covering his late controversy with John Cotton. Shocked beyond measure at the mere title "Bloody Tenent," Mrs. Sadlier did not attempt to read further and tartly told her correspondent not to trouble her again. With more persistence than wisdom, Roger Williams did write still once

more. Mrs. Sadlier was thoroughly roused by the sermon-like epistle he sent and in anything but lady-like language, told the writer he had a "face of brass." Poor Roger Williams was silenced at last.

With this spirited correspondence Mrs. Sadlier left the following memorandum: "Full little did he (Sir Edward Coke) think that he (Roger Williams) would have proved such a rebel to God, the king and his country. I leave his letters, that, if ever he has the face to return into his native country, Tyburn may give him welcome."

In spite of his busy days and the importance of the errand which was keeping him in England, Roger Williams was very homesick at times. He yearned to see the faces of his sons and daughters. He longed, too, for his gentle wife—his "dear yoke-fellow"—and even proposed her joining him over-seas in several of his letters. One of the pamphlets he published while abroad (the one that Mrs. Sadlier rejected) was in the form of a letter addressed to Mrs. Williams. It had been written some time

before on the occasion of her recovery from a dangerous illness while he was absent from home working among the Indians. Though there is more of the sermon than love-letter about it, still we find these exquisite lines:

"My dear love, since it pleaseth the Lord so to dispose of me, and of my affairs at present, that I cannot often see thee, I desire often to send to thee. . . . I send thee (though in winter) an handful of flowers made up in a little posy, for thy dear self and our dear children, to look and smell on."

Rather flowery language, perhaps, to apply to a religious tract, yet it affords a satisfying glimpse of deep husbandly and fatherly affection.

Roger Williams finally made up his mind to return to New England, though the charter matter was not yet closed. It was not alone thoughts of his own immediate family that induced him to make this decision. His larger family—his unruly, quarrelsome colonial family—needed him quite as badly. He therefore left the interests of Providence Plantations in the hands of Mr.

Clarke and turned homeward. The English government granted him a safe passage through Massachusetts and, early in the summer of 1654, he landed in Boston.

CHAPTER XII

ROGER WILLIAMS AS COLONIAL PRESIDENT

WHAT the people of Providence Plantations needed and deserved was a good round scolding. They received it in the form of a sharp letter addressed to the colony by Sir Henry Vane and entrusted to Roger Williams. He wrote:

"How is it that there are such divisions amongst you? Such headiness, tumults, disorders, injustice? The noise echoes into the ears of all, as well friends as enemies, by every return of ships from those parts. . . . Are there no wise men amongst you? No public self-denying spirits, that at least, upon the grounds of public safety, equity and prudence, can find out some way or means of union and reconciliation for you amongst yourselves, before you become a prey to common enemies, especially since this state, by the last letter from the Council of State, give you your freedom, as sup-

posing a better use would have been made of it than there hath been? Surely, when kind and simple remedies are applied and are ineffectual, it speaks loud and broadly the high and dangerous distempers of such a body, as if the wounds were incurable."

Then, calling upon their higher nature, he concluded by saying kindly, "But I hope better things from you."

Roger Williams, too, penned a strong letter on the subject. He was weary at heart because of the constant dissensions around him. Now he gently reminded his friends and neighbors of Providence that "Only by pride cometh contention," and "Love covereth a multitude of sins," but at the same time he did not hesitate to rehearse the trials he had been through for their good. In plain, direct language, he said that for being their "stepping-stone," he had received nothing but grief, sorrow and bitterness. Only a hard-hearted people could have withstood such pathetic words as these:

"It hath been told me that I labored for a licentious and contentious people; that I have foolishly parted with town and colony

advantages, by which I might have preserved both town and colony in as good order as any in the country about us. . . . I was unfortunately fetched and drawn from my employment, and sent to so vast distance from my family, to do your work of a high and costly nature, for so many days and weeks and months together, and there left to starve, or steal, or beg or borrow. But blessed be God, who gave me favor to borrow one while, and to work another, and thereby to pay your debts there, and to come over with your credit and honor, as an agent from you, who had, in your name, grappled with the agents and friends of all your enemies round about you."

For once, Providence Plantations had the grace to be ashamed of itself. For a while, at least, it was on its good behavior. The citizens of Providence appointed Roger Williams to send a reply to Sir Henry Vane, their friendly critic across the water. In this letter, they freely acknowledged their shortcomings, but with this excuse:

"Possibly a sweet cup hath rendered many of us wanton and too active, for we

have long drunk of the cup of as great liberties as any people that we can hear of under the whole heaven."

Forgetting their jealousies and differences, the four towns united and established the government on the old basis. There was peace for the time being, due largely to the fact that on September 12, 1654, Roger Williams was elected president of the colony and continued to serve in that capacity for two and a half years. He would far rather have preferred to remain a private citizen, but was overcome by the wishes of others. Once again he was guided by the watchword "Service."

The first problem with which Roger Williams had to grapple concerned the Indians. The Narragansetts and the natives of Long Island were at war, and the Commissioners of the United Colonies had tried in vain to subdue the former. They sent an armed force against the Narragansetts, which, however, was unsuccessful. They might have pushed the matter further had it not been for Roger Williams' action at this crisis. He sent a letter to Massachu-

setts calling the attention of that colony to the following facts: that their families had been allowed to grow up in peace among the Indians; that the conversion of the savages was not possible so long as unnecessary and cruel wars were waged against them; that even so-called successful wars usually resulted in fearful losses as well as gains.

He did not neglect to put in a good word for his friends, the Narragansetts, who, he said, had never stained their hands with English blood. Through all their territory, he added, Englishmen had frequently traveled alone in perfect safety.

Whether or not Massachusetts was moved by this appeal, she certainly acted as Roger Williams hoped she would. She passed the word round that hostilities would be dropped. Thus again the prevention of an Indian massacre was probably due to the efforts of the great peace-maker.

One of the laws passed during Roger Williams' term of office concerned the sale of strong drink to the Indians. Though laws had been passed before covering this point, they had not been enforced. Now

the new statute provided that two "ordinary keepers" in each town should be the only persons authorized to sell liquor or wine to the natives and that the amount should be limited to a quarter of a pint a day. In case the inn-keeper allowed any Indian customers to become intoxicated, he was liable to be fined twenty shillings for each person found in such a condition. This regulation, while not all that could be desired, doubtless reduced the drink evil greatly and so increased the safety of the colonists.

In spite of the good intentions of Providence Plantations, Roger Williams' path continued to be a thorny one. Stubborn and quarrelsome individuals caused him no end of trouble by refusing to obey the existing form of government. The principles for which their leader had worked and sacrificed were altogether too big for them to comprehend. His parable of the ship meant nothing to them. They misunderstood liberty of conscience to mean license to do whatever they pleased.

Now it is true that Roger Williams had maintained from the first that religious lib-

erty should be enjoyed without interference from the government. He had never preached, however, that the government had no business to put a stop to disturbances if they threatened the general welfare of the colony. In short, any community must protect the rights of its members if it would continue to exist.

Rumors of the above difficulties reached the ears of Oliver Cromwell. Too occupied with important affairs in old England to trouble himself with the bickerings of a small group of people in New England, he yet took time to write a brief note to the colony. He charged the inhabitants to preserve peace and safety and to avoid dishonor to the Commonwealth and themselves through differences at home or invasions from outside.

This order from the Lord Protector was the very weapon needed by Roger Williams and others who were working for good government. It placed a wholesome restraint upon several turbulent spirits and allowed those in authority to enforce their just demands. The most troublesome rebel, how-

ever, could not be kept in subjection very long. He was William Harris, to whom a legal dispute was as the very air he breathed. For many years he was Roger Williams' thorn in the flesh until that usually mild and forgiving individual had him arrested on a charge of treason for his persistent opposition to the government.

William Coddington, who, perhaps more than any other person, had been to blame for the discord that distressed Roger Williams, now came forward and promised obedience. Much as we disapprove of his disloyalty, we cannot help admiring his simple and dignified behavior as he publicly professed his allegiance:

"I, William Coddington, do freely submit to the authority of his Highness in this colony as it is now united, and that with all my heart."

During Roger Williams' presidency, Warwick and Pawtuxet continued to be a source of vexation. Certain inhabitants of those settlements still rebelled against their proper authorities, claiming that they owed allegiance to Massachusetts alone. Even

the Indians used the name of the Bay Colony to cover acts of lawlessness. Roger Williams protested in writing to Massachusetts against her encouragement of such a state of affairs. Not receiving a satisfactory answer to his first letter, he wrote a second time.

One matter which he discussed in this correspondence—the question of defence against possible Indian outbreaks—was as vital as land disputes. It was necessary that his colony secure a supply of ammunition. Twice he asked Massachusetts for the privilege of purchasing it from her, but she flatly refused to sell it. Her action was both unneighborly and unjust.

The condition of Providence Plantations at this time was extremely dangerous. As an exposed frontier colony, unshielded from the Indians about her, her risk of attacks by them was always greater than that of her more protected sister colonies. Though the natives, as a general thing, had a wholesome respect for Roger Williams, yet it was not safe to trust the best of them. Canonicus and Miantonomo were both dead. There

was no knowing to what lengths their tribe might go when equipped with firearms and strong drink. There was no doubt that they had been so supplied by unscrupulous Dutchmen and the very same Englishmen who had refused to sell to the colonists. Roger Williams' indignant words showed clearly what he thought of such practices:

"For myself . . . I have refused the gain of thousands by such a murderous trade, and think no law yet extant . . . secure enough against such villainy."

In addition to the possibility of Indian attacks, there was also a chance that the colony might go to war with the neighboring Dutch province. Such an outbreak would indeed be a calamity, as many supplies came by way of New Amsterdam; still, as England and Holland were at war, hostilities might easily extend to America.

Now Roger Williams and his colony were firm believers in preparedness. Not being able to keep ammunition and liquor entirely out of reach of the natives, they resolved upon the next best thing—to meet the danger by having the colony ready to de-

fend itself should occasion arise. In such a course alone lay safety. Instead of waiting until actual attacks were begun, it was wise to take time by the forelock and prepare beforehand.

A beginning had already been made along this line years before. "Train bands" were organized early in the history of the colony for military drill, and in 1650 the towns were required by law to have their guns in good condition and to keep a magazine of arms and ammunition. Newport's apportionment was the greatest of all, as she was the largest and most flourishing of the settlements. Yet even her means of defence was pitifully small—three barrels of powder, one thousand pounds of lead, twelve pikes and twenty-four muskets.

Another measure of defence was now proposed—the erection of a fort at Stampers' Hill, in Providence. The story of the naming of this spot is too curious to be passed by. One of the Rhode Island historians tells the story thus:

"Soon after the settlement of Providence, a body of Indians approached the town in a

hostile manner. Some of the townsmen, by running and stamping on this hill, induced them to believe that there was a large number of men stationed there to oppose them, upon which they relinquished their design and retired. From this circumstance the hill was always called Stampers' Hill, or more generally, the Stampers."

A street of this name is still to be found on the map of Providence.

The same year that the fort was discussed, a consignment of powder and shot was received by the colony from John Clarke in England. It was placed in the hands of Roger Williams and distributed by him so that each town received one barrel of powder and two barrels of shot each. It was ordered by the General Assembly that money be raised to pay for it to the sum of "ten pound in good and well-sorted strung peage (wampum), after the rate of eight white per penny, and four black per penny, from each town." Clarke's assignment was inadequate enough for the needy colony, still it was something.

Happily, the worst of the threatened

troubles did not materialize. As a result of Roger Williams' second letter to Massachusetts, John Endicott, then governor, invited his old friend to Boston. Roger Williams accepted the invitation and his trip did much to lessen friction between the two colonies. A curious record shows that stormy little Warwick did her part to make the president's mission a success. She voted forty shillings out of her treasury, provided a horse for the journey, and also a pair of "Indian breeches" for Roger Williams' Indian.

The Dutch war cloud failed to burst. Peace was declared between the warring nations across the water before New Netherland and Providence Plantations came to blows.

The fear of the Indians, too, gradually lessened. The matter of fortifications was apparently dropped and neither during Roger Williams' term of office nor for many years afterwards did the Narragansetts spoil their record by shedding the blood of their white neighbors. We like to think

that the colony's best safeguard at this time was its president—a better defence than firearms and forts, one that stood for justice and harmony.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMING OF THE QUAKERS

In the year 1656, Boston was in a fever of excitement. Some Quakers had come to town.

The sect had first put in an appearance in England under the teachings of one George Fox, an earnest, conscientious preacher who, at the early age of nineteen, had felt called upon to give up everything for religion. How his disciples came to receive their curious name is not positively known. One theory is that they were so-called because they were given to excitable, nervous tremblings, but the Quakers themselves have claimed a different origin. According to them, at one time when Mr. Fox was arrested and sent to prison in England, he called upon those around him to tremble at the word of the Lord. Thereupon the magistrate who pronounced the sentence bestowed the term "Quakers" upon his

followers. In any case, it was a nickname, a term of contempt in the seventeenth century, and did not then, as later, carry with it respect and honor.

But why should Massachusetts be alarmed at the coming of this people? Did she object to their habit of using "thee" and "thou" in ordinary speech? Did she consider that, by keeping their heads covered even in the presence of the authorities, they were lacking in proper respect? Or was it that their refusal to take up arms even in a just war was a dangerous doctrine? The Bay Colony doubtless disapproved of all these things. But there were other reasons —and stronger ones—why she frowned upon the newcomers.

First, the Quakers professed to be guided by an "inner light." Whatever it directed them to do, or they thought it directed them to do, that they did, regardless of consequences. It was their sole authority, higher even than the commands of the Massachusetts magistrates and elders. The colony decided to put an end to such unheard-of thinking at once. They were all the more

resolved to do this because of the peculiar actions of the Quakers. A few misguided ones, professing to be led by this same "inner light," did the most extravagant things in their zeal to spread their faith. They used rude, harsh language, they went about half-naked, were disorderly in the streets, and in other ways tried to attract attention. One Quaker even created a disturbance in a meeting-house in Boston. Entering with two bottles in his hands, he crashed them before the assembled congregation, crying, "Thus will the Lord break you in pieces!" In these frenzied disciples of Fox there was almost no resemblance to the quiet, respectable, inoffensive Friends of to-day.

If such outbreaks had occurred in other parts of New England, the offenders would have been punished—yes, even in the liberal colony planted by Roger Williams. For being annoyed, Massachusetts cannot be blamed. For resorting to the extreme measures she did in dealing with the followers of Fox, the Bay Colony had no excuse. It is one of the dark blots on her history.

The very year the Quakers appeared, a severe law was put into effect against them. It provided that all ship-masters bringing Quakers into the colony should be fined one hundred pounds and should give security to carry them back whence they came, that all persons of this belief should be committed to the House of Correction, first whipped and then kept hard at work until transported. In addition, a fine of five pounds was imposed for every Quaker book or writing found in the colony. The penalty for defending Quaker opinions was forty shillings for the first offence, four pounds for the second, and banishment for the third.

Calmly, unresistingly, the persecuted ones paid their fines, served their prison terms, allowed themselves to be banished, and—kept on doing the same things over and over again! Massachusetts did not realize in the least that she was using the very best means of encouraging the faith that she wished to stamp out. The Quakers *wanted* to be martyrs. They gloried in suffering and abuse. The more they were down-trodden, the more they increased and prospered.

Now we come to the part played by the little colony of Providence Plantations in the controversy. Roger Williams was still president when the severities of Massachusetts began. When banished from that colony, the Quakers had to seek a new home, of course. What more convenient or attractive refuge than that of Narragansett Bay, where liberty of worship was not considered a crime? So they flocked thither in increasing numbers.

Roger Williams' great principle, upon which the colony was founded, was now put to a severe test, the most severe it had ever known. Hitherto, all pilgrims of whatever creed, or no creed at all, had been made heartily welcome. But would a like invitation be extended this strange, peculiar people, who were in disgrace everywhere else? The answer came boldly, courageously—*yes.*

The United Colonies decided it was their duty to show their liberal sister colony the error of her ways. The commissioners, therefore, informed her that as they considered they could not be too careful in pre-

serving themselves from such a pest as "Quakers, ranters, and such notorious heretics," they would ask that all persons of the despised sect be removed from the Colony of Providence Plantations and in the future be prohibited from entering it.

The reply to this command was exactly what might be expected. Roger Williams' term of office had expired, but his spirit was still in the air. In two letters the brave little colony placed herself on record as to the stand she took in regard to the unpopular Quakers.

"As concerning these Quakers which are now among us," the first letter went on, "we have no law among us whereby to punish for only declaring by words, etc., their minds and understandings concerning the things and ways of God, as to salvation and an eternal condition."

One shrewd bit of advice was also given, which the other colony might well have heeded. Providence Plantations pointed out that if no attention was paid the Quakers, they would quickly cease to be troublesome.

"And we moreover find," the writers explained, "that in those places where these people aforesaid in this colony are most of all suffered to declare themselves freely and are only opposed by arguments in discourse, there they least of all desire to come, and we are informed that they begin to loathe this place, for that they are not opposed by the civil authority, but with all patience and meekness are suffered to say over their pretended revelations and admonitions, nor are they like or able to gain many here to their way; surely we find that they delight to be persecuted by civil powers, and when they are so, they are like to gain more adherents by the conceit of their patient sufferings than by consent to their pernicious sayings."

In the second letter penned by Providence Plantations, the colony reminded the commissioners that she still prized "freedom of different consciences as the greatest happiness that men can possess in this world." If the Quakers disturbed the civil peace, then, and then only, would interference be justified. In that case, the matter would be re-

Statue of Roger Williams,
Roger Williams Park, Providence

ferred to England and the offenders be sent thither.

The United Colonies then replied, hinting that Providence Plantations would be cut off from all trade if disobedience was persisted in. After this threatened boycott, the colonists concluded it was wise to take some steps for protecting themselves, but recede from their position they would not. They therefore sent a letter to their good friend and agent in England, John Clarke, asking that he use his influence in their behalf.

"They seem secretly to threaten us," the letter ran, "by cutting us off from all commerce and trade with them. . . . They make the prices, both of our commodities and their own also, because we have not English coin, but only that which passeth among these barbarians and such commodities as are raised by the labor of our hands, as corn, cattle, tobacco, and the like, to make payment in, which they will have at their own rate, or else not deal with us.

"So may it please you to have an eye and care open in case our adversaries should seek

to undermine us in our privileges granted unto us and to plead our case in such sort *as we may not be compelled to exercise any civil power over men's consciences,* so long as humane orders in point of civility are not corrupted and violated."

Brave, ringing words, that deserve to be written in letters of gold!

Massachusetts, meanwhile, continued in her unfortunate course, which, happily, the other colonies did not follow so severely. Imprisonment, fines, and banishment were followed by physical mutilation. As a final step, profession of the Quaker faith was made a capital offence. This law was not popular with the people at large, who were far more tender-hearted than their magistrates. Very few received this extreme sentence. The only woman to pay the death penalty was Mary Dyre, wife of one of the leading citizens of Providence Plantations, who refused to keep out of the forbidden territory.

In 1661, Charles II, then the reigning monarch of England, issued a decree putting a stop to further persecution. Thus

closed the five dreadful years of Quaker punishment in New England.

The Quakers, let alone, became useful and respected citizens and contributed a large share toward the well-being of the communities in which they lived. In the colony of Providence Plantations, they steadily gained followers and for over one hundred years took an active part in public affairs. They occupied positions of prominence and influence, especially in Newport. For five years, beginning 1672, Rhode Island had a succession of Quaker governors.

The noble part played by the colony in the dark days of Quaker history was due, in large part, to the teachings of Roger Williams. The stand taken by him and his fellow colonists deserves all the more credit because, personally, they disliked and disapproved of the Quakers. How easy, then, it would have been to inflict punishment upon them and to have found a perfectly good excuse for so doing!

Roger Williams wrote John Winthrop, Jr., his Connecticut correspondent, that he rejoiced the latter's name was not blurred but

rather honored, for his prudent and moderate hand in the Quaker trials.

For a moment we must skip a few years to the date 1672, which brings us to the last chapter of Quaker history which has to do with Roger Williams. In view of that part of the story that has gone before, the admirers of the great man are a bit sorry that this chapter ever had to be written. It happened when George Fox, the noted leader of the Quakers, visited the colony. Roger Williams promptly challenged him to a debate, religious discussions of this kind being very common in that day. Failing to make arrangements to carry out this plan, he debated with three of Fox's most capable disciples instead. They argued three days in Newport and one day in Providence. In order to reach the first debating-place, Roger Williams rowed all the way from Providence to Newport, a distance of thirty miles. It was an all day's work—no small task for a man about seventy years of age.

The meeting was a heated one. Nearly every one lost his temper and even Roger

Williams was unlike his usual kindly, charitable self. Nobody's opinion was changed and both sides claimed the victory. Each published a book presenting long, dry, uninteresting arguments. That of Roger Williams was entitled "George Fox digged out of his Burrows," while the Quaker volume was called "A New England Firebrand Quenched."

Whatever may be thought about Roger Williams' part in these proceedings, he himself thought he was doing the colony a service by arguing the matter in public. It was probably his purpose to show that the community did not approve of disorder and disrespect of the authorities. He maintained that it was not persecution to punish moderately for such disrespect and grotesque offences as had marked the advent of the Friends in Massachusetts.

In spite of his views concerning the early Quakers, Roger Williams numbered among his friends many of this faith. He never allowed his prejudices to govern him in his dealings with them. Best of all—and to his

lasting glory be it said—he never lifted a finger against them, and no page of the history of the colony he founded is stained with Quaker blood.

CHAPTER XIV

ROGER WILLIAMS AS CITIZEN

THROUGH all the ups and downs of her troubled history, Providence Plantations had remained loyal to England. The little colony had allowed unusual liberty in many ways—liberty unknown in other parts of New England—but had never faltered in her obedience to the mother country. Thus when Oliver Cromwell was at the head of affairs, she considered him her rightful ruler. A like loyalty was paid his son Richard. Again, when the country once more became a monarchy, in 1660, she hastened to assure Charles II that the inhabitants of the Narragansett Bay province were his true and faithful subjects.

The news of his accession to the throne was received with great enthusiasm. The General Court appointed an hour for proclaiming "His Royal Majesty, King Charles the Second, King of England, with all the

dominions and territories thereunto belonging" and military officers were ordered to rally the "train band" for the occasion. Besides this, another special day was set apart for solemnizing the event, which was also carried out in true military fashion. All children and servants were given a holiday. The flowery and submissive language with which Charles was acknowledged monarch must sound curious enough to the democratic descendants of these same colonists.

In the midst of all the joyful festivities, one concern filled the minds of everybody. Their right to continued existence must be confirmed. It was clear that Cromwell's approval was out of date. It would have no weight with the restored Stuart sovereign. A second charter must be obtained, one that would bear the undeniable stamp of royal authority. Thereupon Providence Plantations sent word to her faithful agent, John Clarke, asking him to secure the desired charter. By this time the patient man must have been prepared for any kind of request from over the sea.

His success was announced in the year

1663. It would seem that charters were going up in price. According to Roger Williams' testimony, this second one meant an outlay of about a thousand pounds. It was cheap at that, considering the great privileges it carried with it. Under this precious new document, the colony continued to live for one hundred and eighty years, long after the close of Roger Williams' life. When finally abandoned, it was the oldest constitutional charter in the world.

A "very great meeting of the freemen" of the colony was held to receive the royal paper with due respect and honor. With appropriate ceremony, Captain George Baxter, the bearer, opened the box in which it was kept and read the gracious words of Charles to the assembly, after which the charter was "held up on high and presented to the perfect view of the people," then safely locked up in the box again.

By virtue of this latest document, the colony received a new name—or, rather, a bulky addition to its old one. In this charter it was called "The English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations,

in New England, in America." From now on, the name "Rhode Island" became more prominent and "Providence Plantations" less so until, in common usage, it was dropped altogether. In 1776, the word "State" was substituted for "English Colony."

Besides a change of name, the charter also provided that henceforth governors should take the place of presidents and the first governor and his assistants were named. Roger Williams was one of the latter and he repeatedly held this office in the years following.

The most wonderful part of the whole charter was that section granting perfect liberty of conscience to the colony. It was all the more remarkable and surprising, as King Charles was not noted for either tolerance or liberality.

"Our royal will and pleasure is that no person within the said colony any time hereafter, shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, and do not actually disturb the civil peace of

our said colony; but that all and every person and persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernments, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned."

The words might have been penned by Roger Williams himself. Very likely they never would have been written had it not been for his persistent struggle for that same liberty of conscience, about which he said, "We must part with lands and lives before we part with such a jewel."

The founder of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations was now approaching the evening of life. He had carefully watched and tended the infant colony so that it could stand alone. He had raised it to a position of respect and importance. For his unselfish and loving labors, he surely deserved a brief period of rest. Yet, contrary to his wishes, he was drawn into public life again. He wrote his friend Winthrop these reluctant words: "I have since been occasioned and drawn (being nominated in the

charter to appear again upon the deck) from my beloved privacy; my humble desires are to contribute my poor mite (as I have ever, and I hope ever shall) to preserve plantation and public interest of the whole New England and not interest of this or that town, colony, opinion, etc."

From this time on, both in and out of office, Roger Williams showed what an immense amount of good can be accomplished by a public-spirited citizen if he is willing to sacrifice selfish aims for the benefit of all. Time and again there was occasion for him to act as peace-maker, as in the years gone by. Gentleness, tact, and forbearance were the means he used. In a word, he was a great diplomat. Because his victories were bloodless ones, his fellow-citizens did not appreciate his greatness.

For one thing, Roger Williams was chosen to copy the charter into the records of the colony. For drawing up colonial documents of various kinds, his skill was constantly in demand. In 1664, when a revision of the laws was thought necessary, he was appointed member of a committee to attend

to this business. In the same year he was named one of the agents to determine an eastern boundary line between the colony and Plymouth.

Indian troubles were never settled without his intervention. Here he knew his ground perfectly and could be trusted by all parties concerned to give just decisions. The Indians of Warwick, as we have seen, caused endless trouble for the colonists, claiming that as they had pledged allegiance to Massachusetts, Providence Plantations had no right to punish them for lawless acts. Now the sachem Pumham, who occupied Warwick Neck, had no legal right to the land, as his superior sachem had sold it years before. Again and again he stubbornly refused to budge an inch, though the town of Warwick had paid him twenty pounds to seek a home elsewhere.

About this time, four commissioners were sent over to New England by King Charles for the purpose of hearing complaints, settling boundary disputes and like claims, and establishing the peace and security of the country. They now applied themselves to

the task of ousting the mulish Indian chief.

Before long Roger Williams took a hand in the matter. He got in touch with Sir Robert Carr, one of the royal agents, and calmly and clearly reviewed for him the entire history of the quarrel. Then, instead of urging force and harshness, he explained that very different means must be employed with the natives. He likened them to oxen, who, if treated with cruelty, will die rather than yield, but with patience and gentleness, can be made to give good and willing service. "Lay all the blame on me," he concluded, "and on my intercession and mediation, for a little further breathing to the barbarians until harvest, in which time a peaceable and loving agreement may be wrought, to mutual consent and satisfaction."

Roger Williams was a wise prophet. The sensible commissioner took advantage of his co-operation and finally the matter was closed to everybody's satisfaction. And this without a drop of blood being shed, thanks to the man who believed that even erring natives should be treated as human

beings. "I respect not one party more than the other," he once said in a similar quarrel, "but I desire to witness truth; and as I desire to witness against oppression, so, also, against the slighting of civil, yea, of barbarous order and government."

We are glad to know that the commissioners of King Charles handed their royal master a very favorable report of the Rhode Island colony. They even had a good word for the Narragansett Indians. The natives had pledged their allegiance to the king and, in token of their subjection, promised to pay His Majesty two wolfskins a year. They also sent Charles some truly barbarous tokens of affection, including two wampum caps, two clubs inlaid with wampum, and a feather mantle, besides a porcupine bag for the queen. It is a pity these gifts fell into the hands of the Dutch and never reached their destination. What a sensation they would have made at court among the nobles and ladies-in-waiting! But the giving was not all on one side. Two coats were presented the sachems in the king's name, with which they were greatly pleased. It would

not be surprising if Roger Williams had made the suggestion, knowing the Indian weakness in matters of dress.

An opportunity came for Roger Williams to use his influence in behalf of John Clarke, the good friend of the colony who had labored in her interests in the mother country for twelve long years. It had been voted to pay him for his trouble, but due either to poverty or unwillingness (probably both), the required amount had not been forthcoming. So the matter dragged on, long after the charter affair was settled and the agent had returned to America. Even back in London days, Mr. Clarke was so short of funds that he had been obliged to mortgage his Newport home. Stung to the quick by what he considered rank ingratitude, Roger Williams wrote a sharp letter to Warwick, the most backward town.

"It is no more honest," he wrote, "for us to withdraw in this case than for men to come to an ordinary [tavern] and to call for the best wine and liquors, the best meats, roast and baked, the best attendance, etc., and to be able to pay for all and yet most

unworthily steal away and not discharge the reckoning." Then changing his figure of speech, he continued:

"Shall we say we are Christians . . . to ride securely in a troublous sea and time by a new cable and anchor of Mr. Clarke's procuring, and be so far from satisfying his engagement about them, that we turn him adrift to languish and sink, with his back broke for putting under his shoulder to ease us?"

The letter quickened the colony to further action. The mortgaged home was saved, but, unfortunately, the debt was never paid in full.

There were boundary disputes during these years, both among the colonists themselves and with outsiders. In Providence, troubles arose from the Indian grants made so many years before. Mr. Harris, Roger Williams' old enemy, and others interpreted the language of the Indian deed to mean that Canonicus and Miantonomo had really given away several hundred thousand acres of land that had never been taken possession of by the colonists. To-day, if a pretended

claim of a similar nature should come up, we would very likely call it a case of clear "graft." Roger Williams, ever on the defensive when the Indians were concerned, declared stoutly that the chiefs had meant nothing of the kind. And, indeed, what man was better informed on this subject than Roger Williams himself? Had he not dealt directly with the Narragansett sachems? Had he not talked with them in their own tongue? He so persistently blocked and delayed every measure to appropriate the territory in question that the matter was never carried to a successful finish. Still the short-sighted grumblers called his whole-hearted interest "meddling." With saddened heart, he recorded their taunts:

"But some cried out, when Roger Williams had laid himself down as a stone in the dust, for after-comers to step on in town and colony, 'What is Roger Williams? We know the Indians and the sachems as well as he. We will trust Roger Williams no longer. We will have our bounds confirmed us under the sachems' hands before us.' "

The details of the other boundary quarrels make dry, difficult reading in these days. They are interesting only as they bring out the character of Roger Williams and the part he played in trying to adjust them. The disputed land was principally the Narragansett country, or the southern half of the present state of Rhode Island. Massachusetts claimed territory here, so did Plymouth, and, added to their encroachments, were those of Connecticut. If the land had been divided up as they all wished, little enough would have been left of tiny Rhode Island to form a respectable state afterwards!

Roger Williams saw in this desire to annex territory a prevailing greed for land, which he looked upon as one of the greatest failings of New England. He could not understand how his countrymen of the other colonies "should not be content with those vast and large tracts (like platters and tables full of dainties), but pull and snatch away their poor neighbors' bit or crust"; adding, "and a crust it is, and a dry, hard

one, too, because of the natives' continual troubles, trials and vexations."

To Major Mason of Connecticut he wrote a letter (which has since become famous) upholding the rights of Rhode Island. That prominent man afterwards advised his colony that he hardly thought it wise to attempt to acquire the land in question. Thus we infer that Roger Williams' diplomacy did much to avert further aggression on the Connecticut side at least.

Not all Roger Williams' tasks were big ones. He was not the man to say that because he was capable of great things, he would let the little things slip by. He performed numberless neighborly services of a legal character, either as witness or executor. It fell upon him to take charge of the house and lot of a certain John Clawson, a Dutchman, whom he had befriended when needy and employed as a household servant. He had taught him to read and given him a Dutch Testament. It is amusing to think that this Providence real estate was valued at eleven pounds. More amusing still were the terms of its disposal. Roger Williams

sold it for "current country pay" in three yearly instalments of cloth, stockings, corn and apples. Even on these easy terms, the buyer took about double the time for payment that the agreement allowed.

Public spirit was sometimes at a low ebb in early Providence. Thus there was no end of trouble trying to erect a suitable bridge near the center of the town and keeping it in proper repair. The townspeople argued, deliberated, debated, but nobody seemed aggressive enough to push the work. Finally Roger Williams stepped into the breach. "I will, with God's help, take this bridge unto my care." What a relief it must have been to realize that somebody had taken the initiative at last! He made Providence a business-like proposition, whereby the citizens were to donate their labor, the amount being apportioned to the use they would make of the bridge and whether they had a team or not. This sharing of work was only fair, for the inhabitants of the town were to be exempt from toll, a moderate sum being asked of strangers only.

There was nothing striking, nothing im-

pressive, about these public services of Roger Williams and they did not win the applause of the crowd. Sometimes they gained for him nothing but unpopularity. Yet at no other period in his long career do we get a finer idea of the real nobility of the man than in these latter years when old age was coming on and his word was perhaps not listened to with the respect of former days. He cheerfully took up and faithfully performed the local duties that came his way, though he had been recognized by Parliament, had been on an intimate footing with the greatest statesmen of England, and was himself one of the wisest, most far-sighted men of his age. This was citizenship at its best.

CHAPTER XV

KING PHILIP'S WAR

It is not easy to tell the true cause of King Philip's War. There were probably many causes, some of them dating years back. Such a struggle was bound to come, sooner or later, to determine who should remain masters of New England—the first comers or the white men from over the sea. More than once Roger Williams had postponed the evil day, but even his influence was not great enough to prevent the smouldering fires of jealousy, distrust and revenge from finally bursting into a destructive conflagration.

Back in 1620, when the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth, they had formed a treaty of peace with Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoags. This faithful Indian sachem kept his word during the remaining years of his life.

The colonists were not so fortunate in

their dealings with his son and successor, Wamsutta or Alexander. Word was sent to the governor that he plotted mischief against the English and had asked the Narragansetts to aid him in his rebellion. Determining to put an end to such disloyalty at once, the governor, after Alexander's refusal to attend court, had him arrested and taken to Plymouth. It was a most unfortunate business, thus to humiliate a proud chief on his own territory. Suddenly Alexander became violently ill and died almost immediately. The exact cause of his death is not known, but probably extreme heat and anger hastened the end. Bad feeling between the Indians and their white neighbors was the immediate result of this misfortune. Some of Alexander's followers, including his wife, even spread the report that the sachem had been poisoned. This was untrue, but it furnished one of the causes of the hostilities that followed.

Metacomet or Philip, Alexander's brother and the next chief of the Wampanoags, was not one to submit to wrongs tamely. Plymouth and Massachusetts soon

had occasion to suspect him of secretly planning war. In their uneasiness, they appealed to Roger Williams and he succeeded, for the time being, in breaking up Philip's designs. Largely through his influence, the war was put off for four years. Outwardly obedient, the Wampanoag chief gave up about seventy guns to the English as proof of his fidelity. There is no reason to think, however, that he abandoned the idea of a war when the time should be ripe. For several years he merely "marked time" until everything should be in readiness.

The struggle was finally begun in the summer of 1675, sooner than Philip had meant. One of his nearest advisers, a converted Indian, betrayed his chief's plot to the English. It was therefore necessary to strike at once. To be just to King Philip, he doubtless thought he had good and sufficient reason for his action. He summed up the causes of the conflict thus:

"By various means they [the English] got possession of a great part of his [Massasoit's] territory. But he still remained their friend till he died. My elder brother

became sachem. They pretended to suspect him of evil designs against them. He was seized and confined, thereby thrown into sickness and died. Soon after I became sachem, they disarmed all my people. They tried my people by their own laws; assessed damages against them, which they could not pay. Their land was taken. At length a line of division was agreed upon between the English and my people, and I myself was to be answerable. Sometimes the cattle of the English would come into the cornfields of my people, as they did not make fences like the English. I must then be seized and confined, till I sold another tract of my country for satisfaction of all damages and costs. Thus, tract after tract is gone. But a small part of the dominions of my ancestors remains. I am determined not to live till I have no country."

There was grave danger of a Narragansett alliance. Philip had been working for it for a long time. The chief sachems of the Rhode Island Indians at this time were Pessicus, Miantonomo's brother, and Canonchet, Miantonomo's son, and there-

fore nephew of Pessicus. They were joint rulers, much like Canonicus and Miantonomo in the earlier days. But, whereas Canonicus and Miantonomo had been in favor of peace at almost any price, their descendants were not so submissive. A far different spirit fired them. Pessicus, it is true, gave Roger Williams to understand that he was peaceable enough, but had difficulty restraining the younger men of his tribe. Canonchet, on the other hand (the "hopeful spark" of Miantonomo, as Roger Williams called him), was openly declared the war sachem of the Narragansetts. The cruel death of his father still rankled and he would have been less than human had he not longed to make the most of the opportunity for revenge that now came to him without his seeking.

The colony of Rhode Island strongly opposed the war. The inhabitants had no just quarrel with the Indians. Besides, they were under Quaker influence and people of this faith did not believe in taking up arms.

Five Rhode Island citizens, probably

Friends, bent on a peaceful settlement of the dispute, arranged for a meeting with Philip. The story of their conference is quaintly told by Mr. John Easton, the deputy governor of the colony and the head of the party:

"We sat very friendly together. We told him [Philip] our business was to endeavor that they might not . . . do wrong. They said that was well; they had done no wrong, the English wronged them. We said we knew the English said the Indians wronged them, and the Indians said the English wronged them, but our desire was the quarrel might rightly be decided, in the best way, and not as dogs decided their quarrels. The Indians owned that fighting was the worst way: then they propounded how right might take place."

It was unfortunate for the warring colonists, and the Indians as well, that nothing came of this attempt at arbitration. There was one hope left—Roger Williams. The Boston authorities sent three men to Rhode Island with the earnest request that he try to bring the Narragansetts to terms. He

answered the call with his usual prompt willingness. Within half an hour, he had left Providence and was on his way, with the three messengers, to the Narragansett country. He had no trouble in securing an audience with Canonchet, Pessicus and other leading Narragansetts. They greeted him with fair, smooth words—altogether too fair and smooth to be sincere. They agreed to hand over any of Philip's men who fell into their hands, to remain hostile to the Wampanoag sachem, to deliver up all stolen goods to the English, to refrain from further theft, and to serve as a guard about the Narragansett country for the protection of the English.

Poor Roger Williams! Devotedly, unceasingly he worked until, as he said, his old bones and eyes were weary with travel and writing. So constantly was his pen in use that his stock of letter paper completely gave out. Writing to the governor of Massachusetts, he said, "Since I am oft occasioned to write upon the public business, I shall be thankful for a little paper upon the public account, being now near destitute."

And all the time he could not help but "suspect that all the fine words from the Indian sachems to us were but words of policy, falsehood and treachery." His fears were well grounded. No sooner had the Massachusetts men started on their homeward journey than one hundred armed Narragansetts appeared in Warwick and terrified the town. Warning was received, too, from Pessicus that the English in the Narragansett country would do well to be on their guard and to keep strict watch. If they could strongly fortify one or two houses, so much the better; if not, then flight was their only course.

It was plain that the Narrangansetts could be held in leash no longer. The call of their Indian allies—blood of their blood—completely drowned out the gentle voice of Roger Williams. The prayer of Canonicus—yes, and of Massasoit, too—that their children after them might live in love and peace with the English forever was not to be realized. Sadly the best friend the Narragansetts ever had was forced to confess

that the tribe must be subdued as wolves who have attacked sheep.

Meanwhile, the settlement of Swansea, near the boundary line between Rhode Island and Plymouth, had been ravaged by Philip's men and several persons killed and wounded. The war then spread with lightning rapidity through the different towns of Massachusetts. Connecticut, too, was invaded, for the Indians of the Connecticut River had thrown themselves into the struggle. Rhode Island as a colony kept out of the war, but she was not allowed to remain untouched. The Narragansett country became, in turn, a battle-ground in the winter of 1675.

The Narragansetts were accused by the English of having sheltered Philip's people, and, as some of the young braves now and then returned to their homes wounded, it was considered proof that they had, too, been on the war-path. Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut decided to break the power of the Narragansetts before they could join Philip in the spring. They therefore raised a strong force of over a

thousand men and, strengthened by Rhode Island volunteers, marched to a point in the neighborhood of what is now South Kingston.

The Indians had stoutly intrenched themselves in a fort in the midst of a treacherous swamp. Here, on a bleak, freezing December day, a desperate battle, commonly known as the "Great Swamp Fight," was fought to a bitter end. It was the dreadful massacre of Fort Mystic all over again. As in the Pequot War of forty years before, the attacking party forced an entrance into the fort and completed their work of destruction by fire. Exposure and cold, added to the flames, reduced the Indians quickly. They sacrificed several hundred—either slain outright or taken prisoners—but the English also suffered severe losses.

Though the spirit of the Narragansetts was broken, the people of the mainland towns were greatly alarmed. The General Assembly, meeting at Newport in the spring of 1676, urged them to give up their homes and take refuge on the Island of Rhode Island. Newport and Portsmouth

generously offered land for planting and even proclaimed that the new-comers, "so wanting a liberty, shall have a cow kept upon the commons." Many families accepted the invitation with haste and thankfulness. The protected stretch of land in Narragansett Bay became a perfect isle of refuge. The entire town of Warwick moved thither and remained until the war was over. It was the safest thing that could be done, for shortly afterwards, the settlement was practically burned to the ground. Only one dwelling remained standing.

Many Providence people emigrated also, including Mrs. Williams. Of the five hundred inhabitants, less than thirty remained behind. Prominent in the list of those "who stayed and went not away," is the name of Roger Williams. He did not know the meaning of fear and preferred to defend his city rather than join the fugitives on the island. He had not been able to turn aside the savage tide of fury and hate, but at least he could stem it as far as possible. Though over seventy years old, he accepted a commission as captain and faithfully

drilled the few defenders under his command. In addition, he started a subscription list to pay for fortifying a house and building a second defence and himself pledged the largest sum of all—ten pounds. And he was far from being a rich man, too.

On March 29, 1676, the city was attacked by the Indians and twenty-nine dwellings burned. The following tradition shows that even at this late hour Roger Williams attempted to change the will of the savages.

Leaning on his staff, he went to the heights at the north of the town to meet them and reason with them as he had done so many times in the past.

"Massachusetts," said he, "can raise thousands of men at this moment, and if you kill them, the King of England will supply their places as fast as they fall."

"Well," answered one of the chieftains, "let them come. We are ready for them. But as for you, Brother Williams, you are a good man. You have been kind to us many years. Not a hair of your head shall be touched."

Quaker Rhode Island at last woke up

and paid some attention to the question of defence. It was all very well to hold theories about the wickedness of war, but these ideas did not insure safety for one's family or keep the natives at bay. The colony records show that closely following the attack upon Providence, a boat patrol was organized, a garrison provided, and ammunition ordered. Care was taken that the duties of the commander in charge should not interfere with "Captain Williams' power in the exercise of the train band."

Canonchet was captured in April. He was surprised by some Connecticut men and friendly Indian allies, and, in attempting to escape by wading a river, slipped and fell an easy prey to a waiting Pequot on the opposite bank. He was taken captive to Connecticut. As his father Miantonomo had lost his life at the hands of Uncas, so now the son owed his death to Uncas' son. In many ways the earlier tragedy was enacted over again. Canonchet showed the same disdainful pride that Miantonomo had displayed. In answer to an Englishman who questioned him, he replied scornfully,

"You much child! No understand matters of war! Let your brother or chief come. Him I will answer!" Being told that he must die, he said calmly, "I like it well; I shall die before my heart is soft, or I have said anything unworthy of myself."

The tide had turned. It needed now but a final struggle to convince the natives they were fighting against hopeless odds. Philip's wife and son were taken captive in the summer. Soon afterwards, a decisive battle took place near Mount Hope on August 12th. Philip, betrayed by one of his men, was killed. This ended the war.

The citizens of Providence came back to their partly burned town and took up their daily duties once more, but with a greater sense of security. Providence, son of Roger Williams, took his mother home from Newport in a sloop that belonged to him.

The Wampanoags were nearly exterminated, while scarcely a hundred Narragansetts survived. Captives were sold into slavery, either at home or abroad. With this fate in store, Philip's young son of nine years was shipped to Bermuda.

The buying and selling of Indians was allowed even within the borders of liberal Rhode Island. The people of that day were not so enlightened as their descendants of a later age and saw no wrong in such a proceeding. Then, too, they doubtless looked upon the subjection of the red men as a means of safety. Yet this colony was far more humane than her neighbors. The inhabitants passed a law prohibiting Indian slavery for life and those unfortunate warriors who were held as bondmen served a limited term of years only.

CHAPTER XVI

BACK TO THE SHADOWS

After King Philip's War, Roger Williams, now an old man, gradually disappeared from public view. Only now and then do we obtain fleeting glimpses of these last years. We know that at one time he was elected assistant, but declined to serve. This by no means meant that his interest in the colony had ceased, but rather that the burden of years and physical ills had reduced his strength and endurance. He still followed closely the course of events and whenever a word from him could further the cause of right, his voice was heard with all its old-time vigor.

One of the last acts of his life was to write an earnest letter to the town of Providence upholding the just levying of taxes. Clearly, logically, he explained to the inhabitants the necessity of supporting government and order, as they tended to the peace and good of mankind. He also re-

minded them how fortunate they were to live under such a charter as they possessed, for, said he, "Our charter excels all in New England, or in the world, as to the souls of men."

Again, when the people of Providence proposed to divide certain common lands among themselves, he pleaded that they be left untouched for the use of future newcomers who might have to flee from persecution. To the very last, soul liberty was dear to his heart.

"I have only one motion and petition," were his stirring words, "which I earnestly pray the town to lay to heart, as ever they look for a blessing from God on the town, on your families, your corn and cattle, and your children after you, it is this, that after you have got over the black brook of soul bondage yourselves, you tear not down the bridge after you, by leaving no small pittance for distressed souls that may come after you."

Both before and after the war, he spent considerable time preaching to the English dwellers in the Narragansett country and

it is very probable that he had Indian congregations also. Once a month, for many years, he journeyed back and forth, between his own home at Providence and Mr. Smith's at Narragansett, for this purpose. It is remarkable that a man of his advanced age, handicapped by lameness and illness, could have carried on such a work as long as he did.

When he was finally forced to give up active life, he then turned to profitable occupation indoors. He valued time and made the most of it. "One grain of its inestimable sand," he once said, "is worth a golden mountain." After such a long life of faithful service, he could have been excused had he chosen to sit still in the twilight of his life with folded hands. Instead, by the home fireside he put together the sermons he had preached with an idea of having them published. He never saw them in print. The fact that he had to apply to those of his friends in his own colony, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Plymouth "who hath a shilling and a heart to countenance such a work" to meet the expenses of publication,

shows that he must have been poor at this time. The written pages numbered but thirty and the cost of their printing could not have been an exorbitant sum.

There is every reason to think, in fact, that Roger Williams and his wife were partly dependent upon their son Daniel toward the close of their lives. And he cared for them with true filial devotion, too. "I judge," he said in the quaint language of that age, "they wanted nothing that was convenient for ancient people." Instead of saving for the proverbial rainy day, the open-hearted founder of Rhode Island had generously disposed of the best of his worldly possessions for the good of others. Give, give, give! It had been the motto of his life. Said this same son, "He gave away his lands and other estate to them that he thought were most in want, until he gave away all, so that he had nothing to help himself. . . . If a covetous man had that opportunity as he had, most of this town would have been his tenants, I believe."

The humble home in which Roger Williams spent his Providence days was very

likely much like that of his neighbors. They were truly primitive dwellings—those early houses—usually consisting of a single large room down stairs, one end of which was taken up by a generous stone chimney, and a half-story loft above, reached by a steep, ladder-like flight of stairs. As family needs increased, a "lean-to" was added to the main structure. Even so, there must have been scarcity of elbow room in those days of sizable families and free hospitality.

Neither the exact day nor month of Roger Williams' death is known. Like the date of his birth, it remains a mystery. The nearest we can come to it is that it must have been some time between January 16th and May 10th, 1683. No reliable record has ever been found, and the only facts that have come down to us regarding the close of this noble, self-sacrificing life consist of two mere fragments of information. The one, a brief extract from a letter written by one John Thornton from Providence to his friend, Samuel Hubbard, at Newport, the other, a line from a Colonial historian, are as follows:

"The Lord hath arrested by death our ancient and approved friend, Mr. Roger Williams."

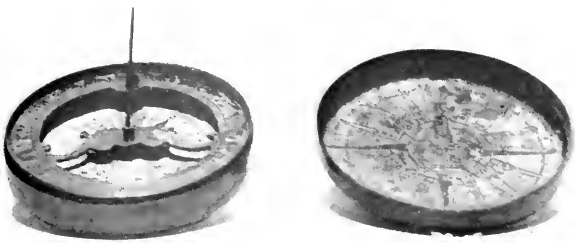
"He was buried with all the solemnity the colony was able to show."

Out of the shadows he came, back to the shadows he returned. The death of the Apostle of Soul Liberty was nothing more than the slightest ripple on the surface of the life of the community. The people with whom Roger Williams lived had no conception of his real greatness. It remained for a later age to appreciate him and his work.

Yet there is an interesting tradition which would seem to show that nature at least did her best to save him from oblivion. He was buried in the family plot at the rear of his dwelling on the slope of the hill which led up from the bubbling spring where he first landed. When, in the rapid growth of the city, it became necessary to remove the graves of the early settlers, there was found in Roger Williams' last resting-place only the spreading root of an apple tree which, in the passing years, had taken on a curious resemblance to the human form.

The personal belongings of Roger Williams at the close of his life must have been few and, for the most part, of no great value. Still at least two priceless relics may be seen to-day which have survived the wear and tear of time. One of these—a pocket-compass—he used to "steer his course" on that momentous journey from unfriendly Massachusetts Bay to the shores of Narragansett. At the base of the instrument are the usual pivoted needle and points of the compass. There is a sun-dial above, the shadows being thrown upon hours cut in the brass rim around the edge of the case. The compass was mentioned in an inventory made by Providence Williams in 1686. It became a treasured family heirloom in the years that followed until it found a permanent home in the rooms of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

What thrilling stories the little compass might tell if it could only speak—of New England woods bowed down with their mantle of snow through which the weary traveler plodded his way, of days and days when the wintry sun made no record upon



Roger Williams' pocket-compass and sun-dial with cover. This photograph was taken at the rooms of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Roger Williams' watch. It is now kept at Frances Tavern, New York City, but is the personal property of Mr. Henry Russell Drowne, whose family received it from a lineal descendant of Roger Williams.

the sun-dial face, of lurking savages whose suspicion was changed to glad greeting once they recognized the fugitive, of welcome wigwams where the fare was crude but hospitably offered.

The other Roger Williams relic is an odd, old-fashioned silver watch, with works of Dutch, and case of French, manufacture. It is heavy and cumbrous, measuring an inch and a half in thickness, with rock crystal in place of glass. The carved silver face has hands of gold and the day of the month, which changes every twenty-four hours. The exterior case (for it is a double-case watch) represents the familiar scene from the "Iliad," where Hector takes an affectionate farewell of Andromache and their small son Astyanax:

"Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy
Stretched his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child,
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground."

It is believed that Roger Williams' wife and children survived him, but incidents of Mrs. Williams' life are tantalizingly meagre. There were six children—the oldest daughter Mary, born in Plymouth, Freeborn, born in Salem, Providence, the first male child in the new colony, a third daughter Mercy, and two other sons, Daniel and Joseph.

Of the oldest child Mary—the little maid of Plymouth and the first who came to gladden her mother's and father's heart—almost nothing is known.

Fortunately, Freeborn's history is less mysterious. She married a young shipmaster by the name of Hart and made her home in Newport with her four children. After her husband's death, she had the courage to marry Walter Clarke, who had been twice a widower and was the father of seven children.

Providence, a shop-keeper and shipmaster of Newport, never married.

Mercy Williams became the wife of Resolved Waterman and the mother of five children. She was married a second time

to Samuel Winsor. Their son Samuel became minister of the Baptist Church in Providence. In one point he agreed heartily with his grandfather Roger—that ministers should receive no pay for their services. With something of his kinsman's spirit, he refused invitations to Sunday dinners "for fear they should be considerations for Sunday sermons."

Daniel Williams married Rebecca Power, a widow whose husband had been killed in the "Great Swamp Fight." It fell to Roger Williams' lot to record the marriage, for he was then town clerk. He described it as "the first marriage since God mercifully restored the town of Providence." Daniel's children numbered five sons.

Joseph Williams, the youngest child, married Lydia Olney, who survived him only three weeks. They had three sons. In Roger Williams Park, Providence, may be seen the old family burial plot of Joseph Williams and his descendants, containing weather-beaten stones bearing old-fashioned inscriptions. That of the head of the family is quaint enough to be given a place here:

"In King Philip's War he courageously went through,
And the native Indians he bravely did subdue;
And now he's gone down to the grave and he will be no more,
Until it please Almighty God his body to restore
Into some proper shape as he thinks fit to be,
Perhaps like a grain of wheat, as Paul sets forth, you see."

In all probability Joseph Williams did his duty during the terrible Indian scourge, yet we prefer to dwell upon those earlier, pleasanter days when the friendship of the red man had not turned to distrust and hatred.

Roger Williams Park recalls that period, for it was formerly the woodland and fields given by Canonicus and Miantonomo to the white neighbor and friend they always loved and respected. In time it became the possession of Miss Betsy Williams, who bequeathed it to the city in memory of her famous and well-beloved ancestor. The hundred acres have since been beautified and added to until to-day the picturesque stretch of park-land is one of the most attractive in the United States—a fitting and beautiful

memorial to the great man whose name it bears.

Miss Williams attached one condition to her gift—that a statue of Roger Williams should be erected by Providence. The condition was met and to Mr. Franklin Simmons of Rome was entrusted the important but difficult task of trying to express in granite and bronze something of the nobility of one of the greatest of Americans.

Roger Williams has also been awarded a niche in the "Hall of Fame for Great Americans" at New York University. He is one of an illustrious company of wonderful characters who have made America—and the world—better for their having lived.

But, after all, it is in the hearts of all true Americans that Roger Williams should be given the most cherished place. The principles for which he stood have so long been recognized and accepted by the world that we are apt to forget there ever was a time when they were new and startling. All the more honor, then, is due him for having had the courage of his convictions when it meant

unpopularity, misunderstanding and suffering.

"Aye, let the Muse of History write
On a white stone his honored name,
Loyal to liberty and light,
First on Rhode Island's roll of fame.

"While Church and State would 'hold the fort'
With sword and scourge and penal fires,
His faith a broader haven sought,
The faith that welcomes and aspires.

"While credal watchwords rise and fall,
His banner to the winds unfurled,
Proclaimed on Freedom's outer wall,
Peace and Good-will to all the world.

"Well may the Muse of History place
Foremost among the just and free,
His honored name, wherein we trace
The soul of Law and Liberty."

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